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THE

LIFE OF TAOU-KWANG,

LATE EMPEROR OF CHINA:

WITH

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF PEKING;

INCLUDING A SKETCH OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHINESE EMPIRE DURING THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

BY THE LATE

REV. CHARLES GUTZLAFF,

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF CHINA," "CHINA OPENED," &c.

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TO

SIR GEORGE THOMAS STAUNTON, Bt. M.P.

THE CONSTANT FRIEND AND PATRON OF ALL SINALOGUES,

This Book

IS HUMBLY DEDICATED,

AS A TRIFLING MARK OF ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHILE this work was passing through the press, the mournful intelligence of the death of its distinguished Author reached this country.

Dr. Gutzlaff died at Victoria, Hong Kong, on the 9th of August 1851, at the age of forty-eight, of dropsy, preceded by an attack of rheumatic gout.

The Publishers, being desirous of prefixing to this posthumous publication a memoir of its Author, applied to his friend Sir George Staunton (to whom the work is dedicated), for some particulars of the Author's life; they also addressed one of the executors of Dr. Gutzlaff on the subject, and were favoured by these gentlemen with such materials as were available for the purpose. But the information thus afforded was too meagre to constitute a memoir suitable for this volume,

and added little to the facts stated in a biographical sketch of Dr. Gutzlaff, which appeared in the "Literary Gazette" of Oct. 25, 1851.

Moreover, it was intimated that the widow of Dr. Gutzlaff is collecting materials for a memoir of the life and labours of her lamented husband, for publication; the Publishers, therefore, considered it advisable to refrain from any attempt to compile a memoir, which must unavoidably have been incomplete and unsatisfactory.

The Publishers take this opportunity of expressing their acknowledgments to Sir George Staunton, for his kindness in revising the work for press.

65, Cornhill,
January 1852.

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THE

LIFE OF TAOU-KWANG;

LATE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

INTRODUCTION.

To be an Emperor of China, is perhaps the highest dignity to which a mortal can aspire. Leaving out all that superstition has added to the exalted rank the monarch holds, there remains still very much which would fill minds like those of Alexander and Napoleon, even at the acmé of their glory, with envy. It is not necessary to talk about the Great Emperor as the prince of princes, the vicegerent of Heaven on earth, the very representative of all living beings, to give a sublime idea of his position; the simple fact of being sovereign ruler over three hundred and sixty-five millions of human beings, is enough to raise the autocrat in worldly estimation.

When one adds to this, that the descendant of a mere chief of hunters sways the above myriads according to his will, keeps the unruly Mongols in utter subjection, maintains his supremacy over Tibet, is liege lord of the Eleuths, and administers his government over the wild inhabitants of Kokonor, and the no less brave inhabitants of Turkistan, one cannot refuse a tribute of homage to such a mighty potentate.

To the unregenerate heart of man, there is something inexpressibly charming in the contemplation of unbounded rule, of which the Chinese Emperor furnishes the beau-ideal. His word is law; his very actions, how trivial soever, the pattern of conduct; he can slay and respite at pleasure; the lives and whole property of all his subjects being at his disposal, he is under no responsibility to a watchful parliament, or a powerful nobility. Sole master and lord, under the endearing title of a father, he does what seemeth good to him. Were there ever sovereign power entrusted to man, it is the Emperor of China who wields the same. To judge of him, we must always view the man in this light, for though he may theo-

retically pretend to be amenable to Heaven and his ancestors; yet these are mere emblems of powers that exercise no influence, except occasionally a moral one, upon his mind.

In viewing the monarch of China in this light, we must not forget the other side of the question. He who has none to command him, must be himself a slave to custom; he who is a legislator through life, has to attend to the most trivial demands of etiquette. Innumerable forms render the Emperor of China an automaton. He may break through them, despise them as they really deserve; but he will not hold long his high rank, nor yet attempt this with impunity. He may be a tyrant, and spread desolation through the court and over the whole land; but let him be attentive to the sacrifices of his ancestors, regularly hold the plough in spring, go to the temples in rotation, appear in times of national calamity as a penitent in sackcloth, impute to himself all the guilt of the nation, and he will be considered an excellent Emperor. On the other hand, let him neglect the behests of the Board of Rites, withdraw from the frequent audiences that are regularly given, dress or deport him-

self differently from what is prescribed by immemorial usage, and a hundred voices will exclaim against the unworthy ruler, and with censure upon censure will denounce him.

A Chinese Emperor can make his mere will the rule of a nation; but he must, at least ostensibly, now and then, pay deference to the better judgment of his statesmen. The nation at large is nothing in itself; yet the man without an equal must make himself popular, by listening to the wishes of his subjects. Every one ought to have access to his ear; the poorest widow be allowed to speak to him through the Court of Appeal. In recent years, we may say it has become fashionable at Court to talk about the wishes of the people; to speak of them as the first to be attended to: as the guide and loadstone in all measures. Though a great many of these phrases are mere verbiage used on proper occasions, still the principles thus expressed have found many admirers throughout the whole land.

From one part of China to the other, demagogical ideas are current, aiming at the curtailing of provincial as well as supreme

authority. The Emperor has to contend with these, and to accommodate himself in such a manner as to reconcile the purest despotism with a popular democracy. The Chinese monarch must be the father of the great, Black-haired race; always tender, kind, and thoroughly Chinese in all institutions and sentiments. He has to shew himself the worthy chief of his Manchoos, who look up to him as such, and expect much from his bounty. Amongst the Mongols, he must appear as a great Chan; whose riches in cattle, whose influence, whose pervading power in the steppes, must awe down all antagonism. To the Tibetans and the numerous nomades, he has to show himself as a great devotee; who looks upon the Dalai Lama as Heaven's incarnation, and feeds all the Lamas who come near him, from motives of extreme piety.

The enormous responsibility thus devolving on the shoulders of the Chinese monarch, does not exempt him from paying due regard to these nationalities; and a deviation on either side might often have dangerous consequences. The administration of so great an empire requires the aid of many distinguished men; and

it would be impossible that some should not become the guides of the monarch: though they call him their master, and reign in his name. However enlightened the "sons of Heaven" may wish to appear before the world, the thraldom in which superstition holds them is nevertheless very strong; and an astrological board —miscalled astronomical—regulates all their important movements.

We have enumerated these limitations to the sovereign authority of the great Emperor; because, in order to judge of their measures impartially, it is necessary to keep these points always in view; and we may thus frequently find a clue to proceedings that would otherwise appear to be unaccountable. A common peasant frequently enjoys more true liberty, more freedom of action, than his prince.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and parentage of Meenning, afterwards Taou-kwang.—His early youth.—The Emperor Keènlung's system of education.—His character and habits.—He abdicates.—Insurrection of the Meaotze.—Projected invasion of India.—Destruction of the Chinese army.—Rising in the North-Western Provinces.—Lawlessness of the soldiery.—Death of Keènlung.—Revelries of the Emperor Keaking.—Fate of his prime minister.—Character and pursuits of Meenning.—Cruelties of the Emperor.—Conspiracy to dethrone him.—His remorse, and subsequent tyranny.—Political fraternity of the Water-Lily.—Persecution of the Roman Catholics.—Conduct and habits of Meenning.—His personal character.—He eludes the proscription of the Emperor.—His choice of friends.—He protects European mechanics.

TAOU-KWANG, who as prince bore the name of Meenning, was born in the end of 1781, long before his father had the least hope of ever ascending the throne.

Keènlung, his grandfather, had many sons; and he had chosen amongst them, from time to

time, the most distinguished as his successor; but those elected either died, or proved themselves unworthy of the high appointment. He left off, therefore, designating his heir, and treated all his children with great impartiality. Anxious to promote their welfare, he gave them very little money, until reaching their 25th year; when they obtained an establishment worthy their rank, and perhaps the title of Wang, or king, with an income of about 10,000 taels, about £3,000 sterling, a year: the princesses having before been disposed of, with a dower, to some Manchoo or Mongol noble, or to a Chinese statesman.

Keènlung's sons and grandsons were, from their sixth year, put under the most eminent of the Hanlin, or doctors. The ministers of State were entrusted with the superintendence of their education; the best horsemen and archers of Mongolia and Manchooria were given them as riding-masters. The monarch wished that the princes of the blood should excel in mental discipline and in vigour of body; strong exercise and great exertions he deemed necessary for invigorating their constitution, and fitting them for their high rank.

There was a large apartment at Yuen-ming-yuen expressly set aside for the instruction of the imperial youths. They were kept there very strictly: the teachers had orders to treat them as the children of common citizens, and to spare no trouble to instil into their minds love for the doctrines of the ancient sages. When they were least aware, the Emperor would suddenly surprise them, inquire into their conduct, make them repeat their lessons, give directions as to the future course of instructions to be adopted, and punish with very great severity, if there was the least neglect.

A Manchoo is born a warrior; and however much Chinese learning may be prized, as absolutely necessary at Court, still, to handle with skill a bow and to gallop a horse, are considered higher accomplishments, more in unison with the national spirit. Those who do not partake with delight in these exercises are considered degenerate, and unworthy to form part of the family which rules over the Chinese Empire. The boys also had now and then permission to accompany their father on his hunting tours, to shew their agility in

riding and shooting. Otherwise, they were kept from all public business, and strictly confined to their studies, with very little intercourse with the Court. Guards were set over them, to prevent them wandering about at pleasure, and forming connections with the people. They generally lived in entire ignorance of all the events that were going on; and, as long as they were under twelve years, they were treated as mere schoolboys.

Gradually, on coming of age, they enjoyed more freedom, but could never leave the precincts of the palace without express permission; which was rarely given them. Thus restrained, without occupation and with a scanty subsistence, *for princes*, their youth was passed in frivolous pastimes. Having passed twenty years, they were called to assist at the ceremonies of the Court; to perform, as proxies for their august relations, the rites on solemn occasions; to take now and then a trip to the imperial tombs, or to sit in judgment upon one or other prince: and to change the monotony of life, they received, occasionally, a summons to repair to the

council-table, and thus come in contact with statesmen.

Keènlung would sometimes unbend on festive occasions, when the whole family was assembled. In the latter days of his life, he numbered children and children's children of the fifth generation. Amongst them he used to sit down with truly patriarchal benevolence, embrace and carry them, and shew himself the father of the family in the fullest sense of the word. Liberties were, however, never permitted; and the loving father was soon changed into the stern monarch, to keep familiarity at a distance.

In such a circle the early days of Taoukwang were passed. His father was the third of four surviving sons, and the 15th child of Keènlung, born of a concubine. The legitimate children had long before died, and the choice of Keènlung was fixed upon Keaking; because he had silently prayed to Heaven, and believed it to be the decree from on High, that he should succeed, as the most able of all his offspring. He abdicated the throne, after a reign of sixty years; and the new

Emperor trod in the steps of his father, as long as his father lived.

It was a very difficult time. Keènlung declared that he had foregone his own predilection, in the appointment of this son to the Imperial throne; and there was, perhaps, none of the princes less fitted to assume the reins of government than Keaking.

Meenning's youth fell upon a very stormy period: even the throne was at times endangered. The iniquitous wars of his grandfather with Birmah and Annam had impoverished the treasury, and the revenue was in an irretrievable state of confusion. Government, having no physical means to meet the coming storm, was obliged to temporize, and it became an administration of expediency.

The Meaotze in Sechuen, who had been subdued with barbarous cruelty, and whose princes had been cut to pieces by slow degrees, to please the Court, rose again to a man, and in a very short time dispersed the feeble garrisons left to keep them in check. They maintained their ground, kept at defiance the detachments sent against them, and only agreed to peace, when, after many years of

direful contest, a round sum was paid into their hands.

The defeat which the Chinese army twice suffered in the Birmah territory, cooled in some measure Keènlung's courage, in planning the projected invasion of India—a darling idea with which some European seems to have inoculated him. It was easy to conclude a treaty with a nation that had gained everything by the war, and kept undisputed possession of the conquered regions; and thus matters were adjusted, even before the abdication of Keènlung.

The invasion of Tunkin, and the annihilation of the whole Chinese army by a handful of rebels, imprinted an indelible stigma upon Chinese prowess. Long afterwards, when Annam was swayed by its native prince—a man of enterprise and great renown, who prized European science, and despised Chinese antiquated lore—threats of instant war were several times thrown out, by a power which had never before been otherwise than in vassalage to the Chinese Empire. All these indignities Taou-kwang's father had to endure, without ever being able to crush the puny king who thus rose against his liege lord.

Yet these were trifling evils, which Keèn-lung bequeathed, when compared with a very general rising in the North-Western Provinces. An extraordinary mania seemed to have seized the people to clamour for liberty, or to demand of Government the means of subsistence in years of severity. The malcontents appeared in thousands and hundreds of thousands, apparently without a real object; laying the whole of Shensi waste, spreading to Shansi and even Chihli, and undermining the very foundations of the State.

It was indeed a trying time when these events took place. Taou-kwang was then about twenty years of age; and, though doubtless unacquainted with the details of the far-spreading insurrection, he knew, nevertheless, that the storm raged not far from the Imperial palace. The soldiers sent out against those masses of marauders, were themselves poverty-stricken, and had to live by plunder; they were, therefore, as much hated by the peaceful peasantry as the rebels. Had the latter been organized and formed into a political faction, they would have overthrown the reigning dynasty; as it was, they merely rendered

themselves odious as robbers. Starvation occasioned by drought swelled their ranks, and they might have maintained themselves a very long time; if the common people, wearied by their exactions, had not risen to a man against them.

Keènlung in the mean while died, and Keaking could now throw off the restraint which had so much harassed him. The whole Court was changed: instead of sage counsellors, frolicsome boon companions filled the halls; instead of deliberations about the affairs of State, the imperial palace resounded with the sounds of music and revelry; buffoons and play-actors became the companions of the monarch, and every honest man who had a character to lose withdrew from the administration.

This was the society into which Meenning was ushered, at an age when the passions are the strongest, and reason is weakest to curb them. The grave tenure of Keènlung's government, and the severe discipline introduced in all departments, rendered the change acceptable to the majority of courtiers; and a thousand flatterers surrounded the throne, to whisper the joys experienced at the commencement of

the reign of licentiousness. Money was only wanting to render their bliss perfect; and this was soon found.

Hochungtong, the prime minister of Keën-lung during the latter part of his reign, had exacted much of the sovereign, and proved an eyesore to Keaking; who, however, forebore during the life of his sire: but as soon as he was dead, the magnate received orders to appear at the coffin of the departed, and perform the funeral rites—the highest honours he could enjoy. Soon afterwards the minister was declared a traitor to his country; and a long list of charges, most of them ridiculous, was brought against him. He had many adherents, and as it was not unlikely that a general rising in his favour would take place, he and his whole family were executed with the utmost cruelty.

This statesman had been one of Taou-kwang's instructors: a man distinguished by the utmost urbanity; who had risen from a life-guardsman to this dignity, partly by his own merit. The sum which the Imperial persecutor obtained from the confiscation of the minister's property, amounted, it was said, to eighty million taels: above twenty millions sterling. This was indeed

a treasure; luxury and rioting had no longer any check: with wasteful levity the money so easily obtained was speedily spent, and the capital now abounded with sybarites and shameless sycophants, who eagerly thronged around such a congenial master.

The only account we have of Meenning is, that he was wholly taken up with martial exercises. Riding and shooting were his pastimes —his occupation; no exertion was too great for him; he willingly underwent fatigues, to harden his body against the effects of effeminacy. Whether he partook in the orgies that were daily taking place in his father's house, is not known; but as he was naturally of a serious disposition and an economical turn of mind, probably he had little taste for such enormities. Being, moreover, not fond of society, he lived a very retired life, and seems to have attracted very little attention. The crowd of princes who thirsted after such pleasures, and gloried in being present at scenes of debauchery and drunkenness, no doubt regarded him with contempt for not mingling in their riots.

Many of the ancient counsellors had left

the court voluntarily, disgusted with the utter disregard of all moral principle. The few who remained, saw with terror the fearful progress of the voluptuary; who often in a fit of drunkenness committed the most cruel acts: but none dared to remonstrate; for the sword was ever ready to stop the mouth of any daring censor. At an early period, therefore, a conspiracy was formed, for the express purpose of dethroning Keaking and setting a more worthy monarch upon the throne; and it had very extensive ramifications. In the year 1803, the Emperor returning one day in a palanquin to his palace, was attacked by assassins. Only a few officers came to his assistance; and the eunuchs, in this instance, seem to have saved him.

On examining into all the details of this attempted regicide, it was discovered that the highest officers of state and the very princes of the blood were implicated; and it was thought dangerous to receive the confession of one of the traitors, who had turned king's evidence, as conclusive. The Emperor wished that the pang might have been spared him of being abhorred by his own kith and kin, and he therefore in a

public edict declared, that he attached no belief to the denunciations: "Even a bird of prey," he says, "does not devour its own young; how then could it be supposed that his relations would be so abandoned as to commit such a horrible deed." Only a few individuals were executed; but these in the most horrible manner; amongst them was the son of the degraded minister Hochungtung, one of the principal conspirators.

Keaking seemed to feel some remorse on this occasion, and expressed it openly: but his tiger nature soon returned. One prince after another, on whom the suspicion had fallen, was removed under various pretences, and sentenced to end his life in solitary confinement, or in banishment on the borders of the Helungkeong. From this moment, the Emperor became a terrible tyrant to his family, and actually raged against its members as his worst enemies. In all these transactions the name of Meenning not once occurs: it is more than probable that he kept entirely aloof from court cabal, and avoided the determined conspirators who had sworn the death of his father.

Keaking had suffered much from the insur-

rection of the Pe-leen-keaow, or "Sect of the Water Lily," a wide-spread political party, that threatened the overthrow of his administration. Against this fraternity, which obliged him to be in arms years together, he conceived a bitter hatred; which extended to all religious associations: and none had to feel his wrath so much as the Roman Catholics. He was their fierce persecutor; and endeavoured by all means in his power — by executions, fire, and sword—to destroy these religionists. From one end of the empire to the other, the torch of religious hatred was lighted, and thousands died under the hands of the executioner.

None of Meenning's actions shew, that in this respect he resembled his father. It is very probable that he had some knowledge of Christianity; for several of the princes had, in times of yore, embraced it, and the investigation as to their belief had made known most of the tenets; and those who openly condemned them were obliged, at the same time, to acknowledge their excellence. The recent persecution of the Christian religion attracted attention more than anything else; and the favourable opinion subsequently entertained

by Taou-kwang towards Christians, may mainly be ascribed to his having early learned to detest the intolerant spirit shewn by mere debauchees.

It had been proposed that colleges might be erected for the instruction of Manchoo youth. Keaking ridiculed the very idea; for, said he, my countrymen are warriors born: the horse and bow are the only objects worthy their study. They are naturally averse to researches of a studious nature; and there are few who, even with honours and emoluments put before them, arrive at a thorough knowledge of literature.

Such an exhortation found therefore many admirers; but none, perhaps, realized the wishes of the Emperor as fully as Meenning. He had never shown great predilection for the science contained in Chinese books, yet had learned sufficiently to pass his examinations, under the strict rule of his grandfather. Now, however, he gave himself entirely up to archery and horsemanship. He exerted himself so much that he weakened his constitution by continually riding and drawing the bow, running and wrestling, until he was obliged to take

tonics to invigorate his body. Of these the Chinese pharmacopeia has a great variety, and they are frequently applied with very little discretion. Meenning partook of them immoderately, and permanently undermined his health. Premature age crept upon him: even as a youth, he had the appearance of a man of forty. His features, which had never been very attractive, were now much contracted and shewed deep wrinkles; he lost most of his teeth, which contributed to the deformity of his mouth; and his whole aspect became that of a stern and unbending censor. Yet under this severe exterior, which struck every stranger, there was much good nature and kindly feeling, a forgiving spirit and honesty of purpose.

It was about this time that Meenning saw his two uncles condemned, on suspicion that they intended to subvert the existing government. The usual doom—solitary confinement in darkness—was pronounced upon them; and it is very probable that they died of grief and hunger. Keaking always affected the greatest regret at being obliged to have recourse to such harsh measures; and an edict, expressing in set phrases his moral rectitude, and

his abhorrence of the turpitude of his nearest relations, prefaced the sentences pronounced against them. One after the other fell a victim to his suspicions; and even his very children were no longer secure.

Whilst Meenning abstained from all political affairs, he eluded the spies that beset all princes. He was, moreover, not a youth of high promise, as far as mental capacity was concerned; and on that score could inspire no fear. Seeing nothing but desolation and terror about him, he naturally sought some friend to whom he might cling; and he then formed those connections and friendships which lasted through life. None was a greater favourite with him than the youthful Keying: we have from his own mouth, a relation of how they used to come together to sing and enjoy themselves, and how amidst their sports all cares were forgotten.

There was at that time (1807-1812) not the slightest probability that Meenning would ever ascend the throne; on the contrary, there were others who had far higher claims, and finally became objects of Keaking's jealousy. Amongst the friends of the young

Meenning, we must also number Muchangah, Lungwan, an especial favourite, Hegan Paouking, and the Chinese Pwanshegan—the latter for a short time, as we believe, his tutor—with many others. The constancy of his attachments was very remarkable: once having called them friends, he did not forget them when on the throne; they then became his counsellors, his ministers, with whom he was in daily converse. Trusting less to his own judgment, he leaned upon them entirely for advice, and was unhappy without their society.

He felt, on the other hand, very little inclination to have anything to do with the ministers of his father. Even the celebrated Lung, who had to go through so many phases of degradation and exaltation, and was considered the most straightforward and unbending minister of his time, seems to have given rise to no feelings of veneration in Meenning's breast. Perhaps he wished to avoid even the semblance of political partisanship, and, therefore, kept entirely aloof from all statesmen.

There was at that time a very strict order issued, that none of the princes should correspond privately with any mandarin: even the most

indifferent subjects were not to be made topics of conversation between them; and if they met on duty, they had to confine themselves entirely to the prescribed rules of intercourse. A look, a slight oversight of etiquette, compromised, at that critical time, the safety of any one at court; and there were always a number of men who interpreted to Keaking, in the most malicious manner, what was otherwise perfectly innocent in itself.

Meenning had perhaps not sufficient capacity to appreciate western science. During the preceding reign, artists of some talent had found their way to the court; Keènlung had painters, mechanics, and musicians (the latter from Europe) to afford him amusement, and at the same time to entertain him intellectually. Keaking reduced their number, put them under strict surveillance, and very rarely required their services. The great persecution waged against the missionaries robbed them of all the influence they formerly possessed at Court. Meenning appears never to have sought their acquaintance, like so many princes before him; or in subsequent years, when on the throne, to have valued their scientific acquire-

ments. For him such abstruse subjects had no charm: yet he felt that those men were unjustly dealt with; and one of his first measures, when in power, was to put a stop to the disgraceful treatment they received at the hands of government. Padre Serra seems to be the only man who knew the prince before his accession; but he has very little to communicate respecting his history.

CHAPTER II.

War against pirates. — Occupation of Macao by the English.—Imperial proclamation.—Chinese policy.—Keaking's estimation of the power of the French.—Opposition to his government.—His debaucheries.—Meenning's resolute defence against a band of robbers.—He is appointed his father's successor.—Keaking describes the incursion of the robbers.—Increased severity of the government.—Arrival of the English Embassy in China.—State of the Chinese Court.—Keaking's latter days.—Meenning's freedom from corruption.—His unassuming character.—Keaking's sixtieth birthday.—His death.—His testament.—Meenning ascends the throne.—His reverence for the Empress Dowager.—Description of his person and character.

THE great convulsions in the whole western world did not reach China. There was a more ignominious war to be waged at that time against pirates; who fought, for some time, under the command of an old woman. The weakness of government was never more striking than when treating with those lawless marauders; and the badge of a mandarin became a

bye-word, when those men of blood were invested with the rank, and held commissions in the imperial navy.

As a few buccaneers were able to terrify the great Emperor, his astonishment and fear must have been tenfold on hearing of the approach of a British force, sent to occupy Macao for a time, and avert a threatened French invasion. Consternation seems to have spread through the whole length and breadth of the land, on both occasions; in 1802 and 1808. The Court might, perhaps, have overlooked the matter, but two Portuguese missionaries presented a memorial, describing the danger which threatened the country. The suspicious mind of Keaking scarcely needed such a monitor; he magnified the risk, and began to tremble for the safety of his realm. If the pirates, in their crazy vessels, could not be driven from the shores of China by the imperial navy, how much less a well-armed fleet of foreigners. What must be the consequences of their landing, when the nation had been goaded by bad government into insurrection, and men of high standing were only waiting for an opportunity to overturn the existing order of things?

The anxiety was very great; and, though the expedition of 1802 withdrew much sooner than could have been expected, there remained a secret grudge on the part of the imperial government. This was shewn still stronger in 1808, when Admiral Drury made his appearance to take formal possession of Macao, and protect it against the French. In the rescript, which followed upon the representation of the Chinese governor, it is said:—

"The war of the French with the English is a matter of the outside barbarians, in which the Central Empire is not concerned; just as little as, latterly, in the contest between Siam and Birmah. The great Emperor looks upon all with the same benevolence, and has not the least partiality for any. The middle kingdom and the foreign territories have each their respective appointed borders. Our vessels do never proceed over a wide ocean to foreign countries and establish themselves there; whilst ye all at once dare to sail to Macao, and go and live there on shore; which is the height of fool-hardiness. If ye say, that, being apprehensive lest the French may come to insult the Portuguese, you have therefore hastened

to their aid; can you be ignorant that the Portuguese barbarians are established in the Central Empire, and that the French will not dare to invade and take them, and thus wantonly offend against the Celestial Empire? Had the French really this object in view, the hosts of the Celestial Empire are in full force, and will not shew the least indulgence. A large army will be sent forth to exterminate them, and the maritime prohibitory regulations will thus be vindicated.

"Your nation has acknowledged fealty to the Celestial Empire, and sent the customary tribute, and have been called respectfully obedient. Now, however, you are ignorant, and daringly offend against the laws; is this not most irrational? It is on this account that we send these clear orders to you. If you will learn to fear, and immediately withdraw your soldiers, and sail away without stopping a single moment, we may indulgently forgive your crimes, and, as heretofore, allow your nation to trade. But if you delay, and do not obey the laws, not only will the trade be stopped for the present, but we shall also block up the entrance of Macao, cut off your provi-

sions, and send an army to surround you. Then repentance will be too late."

These were the leading ideas that suggested themselves as most applicable to terrify foreigners into compliance. Whatever interest Meenning took in this matter—and it seemed as if the whole Court was alive to the emergency—whatever was his private opinion, the above words remained deeply engraven in his mind, and were many times repeated whilst he was emperor: it was, indeed, the essence of Chinese policy from first to last; until the spell was dissolved by the Nanking treaty. The statesman's aim seems to have been, to keep barbarians at a distance; attack their dearest interest—commerce—when they became unruly; and avoid the least approach to a good understanding.

Of the French power, Keaking appeared to have no adequate idea: he hoped to surround those warriors, if they dared to approach the Chinese coast, with his terror-inspiring army, and annihilate them at his leisure. And, after this remark, he asks triumphantly: "What can the fish do when once in the kettle?"

The hand of God changed events, and

overthrew Napoleon's power. But had his legions conquered in Russia, had the Turkish Empire fallen a prey to his ambition, had Persia and India bowed before the conqueror, would China have escaped? He certainly was the man to conceive and execute such designs, as the conquest of the Empire; and the highest triumph of his life would likely have been, to send an order from Peking for constructing a large canal in France, on the model of that of China. Such, however, was not the will of Providence; and it is, perhaps, not by European influence that China is to be added to the great family of our civilized race.

After this digression, we shall refer to the event which gave to Meenning the throne, and fixed for ever his father's affections upon him.

Whilst the coast was ravaged by pirates, the country did not enjoy tranquillity. One sect after the other arose to oppose the government; and the efforts to put them down were frequently not very successful. There seemed to be a determinate struggle against the Manchoos as rulers; but the heads of the conspiracy were not unanimous, and had a far

greater desire to burn and plunder the peaceful villages, than to overthrow a weak government.

Keaking troubled his head very little about coming events. Surrounded by voluptuous women and entertaining mountebanks, he spent his time as a debauchee. All the duties of the monarchy were confined to giving audience twice in the day, and when this was over he retired again to the harem to celebrate his orgies. The fear of disturbance seems to have finally dwindled away; because every courtier and prince was terrified, and dared not to rise against the unworthy ruler; even the palace gates were, either intentionally or from sheer neglect, not guarded. When, in the eventful year 1813, a band of robbers penetrated to the very harem, there was none to defend the Emperor, except a few princes; amongst these was Meenning, who, seeing the assassins climbing the last wall, and approaching the apartment where his father was, shot two of them dead with his own hands. This assistance in time of need, and his resolute defence, decided Keaking to name him subsequently his successor.

In speaking of the extraordinary event, the Emperor remarks, that he had "endeavoured to rule for eighteen years with great determination; eight years the struggle against the Water Lily faction (Pe-lien-keaou) lasted, and the nation suffered most fearfully. At length, the *Tien-lee* (heavenly principles) triumphed, and orders for the extermination of these rebels were issued. Seventy of these villains penetrated into the inner palace, and killed the soldiers and servants. Four of them, however, were seized, whilst one ascended the wall to enter the imperial apartment. Just then my second son, Meenning, seized a musket and shot two of them; another prince killed a third, and thus forced them to retreat. In the mean while kings and ministers thronged to render assistance, and one night and two days were spent in putting down the robbers. Though this attack," the Emperor continues, "was sudden, the preparations must have required a considerable time; and we ascribe this to the criminal neglect of the ministers. We, on our part, will examine into our conduct and amend our faults, &c."

This fearful event caused much sensa-

tion; and from that moment the Emperor was execrated by the whole nation, which universally ascribed those conspiracies to his own conduct. None of the courtiers had appeared personally as the aggressors; yet it was soon ascertained that the higher nobility were deeply implicated, and that princes of the blood were waiting to finish what the assassins had commenced. The investigation into this affair was kept a great secret, until several high nobles were condemned to die, on the tombs of their ancestors, to make the punishment more severe.

It is very probable that Meenning from henceforth was always about his father, though he did not exercise any influence upon the government. This was carried on with still greater cruelty: the mere imputation of belonging to a prohibited sect became a reason for sentencing a man to capital punishment; informers were rewarded, and, in a few years, there were about 12,270 persons in prison, doomed to expiate their offence by death.

In such a state was the Empire when the English embassy, in 1816, reached the Court. It was not to be expected that such a visit

escaped the attention of Meenning; and we should have liked very much to have heard his observations upon these foreigners from afar.

The rude behaviour of the Manchoo princes made no very favourable impression upon the strangers. Partly to show their bravado, partly to exhibit their natural character in the worst points, they indulged in boisterous conduct which could not but greatly disgust their foreign visitors.

We may form some idea of the state of the Court, when the whip was used to keep the courtiers in order; and constant evasion and falsehood were employed to inveigle the foreigners into derogatory concessions. No mention is made of Meenning; and this is evidence of the retired life he lived, or that he was not yet openly acknowledged as the future sovereign. It is very probable that he did not live at Court; being disgusted with the society there, and unable to exist in such an atmosphere. For his own sake, we shall persuade ourselves to believe this.

The latter days of Keaking's reign were as stormy as ever; and the same cruel persecution against the prohibited sects raged through-

out the Empire. But to give lustre to his reign, he caused a beautiful essay upon good government to be written, predicting the return of the glorious times of antiquity, and hinting that the golden age might yet arrive under his administration. A storm or earthquake, or any other phenomena of nature, in which even the Imperial voluptuary beheld a higher hand, roused him to reflection; and Keaking then began to moralize. He even complained that he was surrounded with spies by his own ministers; and, when he sought refuge amongst the eunuchs and play-actors, his favourite companions, he threw upon his ministers all the guilt of his bad government.

Meenning could not fail to be occasionally present at the parties given by his father, and to behold the abandoned characters of those who constituted his bosom friends; and that he, in such a hot-bed of vice, should have breathed a pure atmosphere, and left this den of all that was vile, unsullied, is matter of admiration, and speaks volumes in favour of his character. He avoided, on the other hand, all interference, and never remonstrated, whatever might happen. Nor did he come forward, as the

appointed heir of the crown, to arrogate those honours which in that character would fall to his share. Had he shewn the least inclination to exhibit himself as the future ruler of the vast empire, he would, with many of his best contemporaries, have soon ceased to behold the light of the sun. It was his unassuming character that pleased his father most; for he gave no rise to suspicion, and betrayed no emotion amongst the most trying scenes, when his kindred and acquaintances were hurried to execution; and he lived without making any party for himself. When he had his bow and arrows, his matchlock and horse, Meenning was satisfied, and cared very little for the affairs of state; which were beyond his reach. Being totally devoid of the talent for plotting, none of the grandees ever made him a confidant of their plans; and even slander could not accuse him of having meddled with politics.

The sixtieth birthday of his father finally approached. Great rejoicings were to take place; as Keaking wished to shine by his generosity and magnificence. All eyes were directed to him; and thousands of petitions were sent to beg for relief, for justice, or for the life

of a friend or relation unjustly sentenced. Keaking had promised to hear and to settle all; but when he found that whole heaps of representations were thrown upon him, he repented of his promise: the applicants were sent to his ministers, and the auspicious day ended with disappointments to every one. It seemed that a fatality attended everything the Emperor did. The few remaining honest men amongst his ministers, including the celebrated Lung, were forced to leave his service; and servants of a similar stamp with their master were entrusted with the administration of important affairs. There was no end of bickering and recrimination: the whole cabinet was occupied with nothing but intrigue. Woe to the man that would have dared to cleanse the Augean stable!

Tyrants do not, however, live for ever. Keaking, for many years, expressed his desire to go on a pilgrimage to the mausoleums of his ancestors; this being a duty he owed to his kindred, and an act of piety which all his predecessors had performed. But he did not like to leave his luxurious capital: he was afraid of an insurrection, and hence always

found an excuse. During these consultations the seal of the Board of War was lost; which in China, where nothing is done by subscribing the name, and everything is certified by seals, was a very serious matter. Keaking's suspicions were roused, many grandees were degraded, a regular persecution followed, and the whole Court was thrown into a state of terror. Keaking at last set out upon his intended journey, and was reported to have died (2nd Sept. 1820) at some one of his pleasure palaces: but none ever exactly told how he came to his end. So much only is certain, that he was detested by all, even his own boon companions; and that, since his last acts of cruelty, nobody's life at Court was safe, even for twenty-four hours.

We quote the following passages from the edict published as his will: — "The great Emperor, who received the Empire from revolving nature and Heaven, was three years instructed by his father. A good administration consists in venerating Heaven, imitating the ancestors, diligence in government, and love to the people. In the beginning of my government the robbers of three provinces were still

in full array; but after four years the world was at rest. I was always an enemy to strange opinions; I have suppressed the same, and inculcated true principles, as the best means to support human society. All the evils that fell upon my subjects I instantly removed, and I remitted all arrears on my sixtieth birthday.

"When I was recently going out hunting, I found some difficulty in ascending a mountain, the phlegm of my chest rose to the throat. In my days of health, however, I had appointed a worthy successor, and inscribed his name on a piece of paper preserved in a chest. This prince had killed two robbers when they attacked my palace, the remainder were thereby terrified, and I gave him the cognomen of Wise. The present sickness is likely to end my life, and I, therefore, confer the empire of the world upon this my son, on account of his great virtues. Do thou, my son, have intercourse with virtuous persons; foster thou the Black-haired nation, and follow up my measures."

Keaking breathed his last in the same Palace where his father was born. Whether he him-

self penned his long testament is very uncertain. Meenning was near at hand, however, and no doubt omitted nothing to establish his authority. It is said that Keaking, in his last moments, wished to declare a younger son, the legitimate offspring of the Empress, his successor. But this son was still a boy; and the mother, fearing a collision, herself suggested the necessity of his abiding by the first choice. Thus was Meenning raised to the throne. His brother, known afterwards by the name of Hwuy Wang, though long his companion and friend, afterwards became his competitor; and for a time engaged in a struggle about the succession: but he has outlived the time of persecution, which he brought upon himself, and has lived to see Taou-kwang's son, Hien-fung, on the throne.

Meenning never forgot the service thus rendered him by the Empress; and having lost his mother, a mere concubine, he adopted the Empress as his own parent; giving her the title of Empress-dowager, and honouring her, as such, with all marks of filial piety. The obedience he shewed her, the open reverence he exhibited whenever he approached her, and

the regard he paid to her suggestions, shewed that the honour and homage which he offered were not merely external, but were prompted by the feelings in his breast.

His two uncles, who were in confinement, were set at liberty, and reinstated in all their offices; and a general amnesty, which was never broken, was the first act of his accession. But we must not anticipate events.

Thus called upon, in his thirty-eighth year, to assume such an important office, and become the greatest of all earthly sovereigns, it was the general opinion of the courtiers that the new Emperor would be a mere tool in the hands of designing women or eunuchs. They came to this conclusion in consequence of the extreme reserve which characterized Meenning as a prince. He never expressed his own opinion, never gave advice in important matters, and did not venture to speak in the presence of strangers. Instead of the cognomen of the Wise, he ought to have been called the Discreet: and he fully justified such a title.

Meenning was lank in figure and low of stature, with a haggard face, a reserved look, and quiet exterior. He silently pondered over

his good fortune; having learned well enough to suppress his genuine feelings, and to assume apathy: the only safeguard under such a suspicious master. He had been tutored in the art of apparently taking no interest in anything, and indulging in a quiescent state; and many of those who did not know him, augured a reign worse than that of his predecessor. Yet he possessed an unbending honesty of purpose; a kindly feeling towards sufferers, and a readiness to help in time of need; and he had also those business habits, which would have given him the first rank at a banking-house and on the exchange. But he was not born to be an emperor: he would have shone as an honest farmer; and in any position of life where solid qualities, but not a bright understanding, were required.

CHAPTER III.

Accession of Taou-kwang.—Superstition of the Chinese.—Humility and generosity of Taou-kwang.—Ceremonies on his ascending the throne.—He mourns for his father.—The harem abolished.—Taou-kwang pays homage to the Dowager-Empress.—His generosity towards his enemies.—Gradual changes in the Cabinet.—Character of Lung.—His popularity and his rise to power.—Vain efforts of the Emperor to remain independent of counsellors.—His choice of advisers.—Account of Keying.—Character of Hegan.—Of Chargal.—Of Keshin.—Of Elipoo.—Of Alitsinga.—Of Lungwan.—Office of Kingching and Kwulin.—Claims of Prince Paouking.—Relatives of Taou-kwang.—Serious aspect of the Court.—Frugality of Taou-kwang.—His desire for accumulating silver.—Its effect upon the currency.—Economy in the treasury.—Taou-kwang's administration.—His toleration put to the test.

THERE was at first an endeavour to bestow a different name, Yuen-hwang, upon the new Emperor; but Taou-kwang—*Reason's lustre or light*, was finally adopted as the most apposite. The superstition of the Chinese lays a very great stress upon the name assumed by the Govern-

ment: days are spent in making a choice of the proper characters, and the astrologers most carefully inquire whether the title will prove acceptable to the stars. If there is a malignant influence above, the characters must be changed.

From the State papers published at his accession, we make a few extracts. In one he says:—"From the late Emperor, who is now gone the great journey, I received the utmost possible kindness and care. Although his benevolent life has been continued more than six decades of years, his celestial person was still robust, and his energy and spirits undiminished. I, the Emperor, who constantly waited on him in the palace, desired his days to be protracted, and hoped that he would reach his hundredth year. When he finally became ill, and a great danger to his life was apparent, I, the Emperor, beat the ground with my head, and called on Heaven to bring him back, but in vain. My sacred and indulgent father had, in the year that he began to rule alone, silently settled that the throne should devolve on my contemptible person. I, knowing

the feebleness of my virtue, at first felt much afraid that I should not be competent to the office. But on reflecting that the sages, my ancestors, left to posterity their plans, that his late Majesty had laid the duty on me, and that Heaven's throne could not long be vacant, I have done violence to my feelings. A new monarch ought to confer benefits on his kindred, and bestow gracious favours extensively."

This was not an empty promise: the Manchoo noblemen, the Chinese mandarins, the people at large, the culprits in prison, all shared in the imperial generosity. Taou-kwang turned his attention to the old and decrepit, to the deserving, and to the humble field-labourer as well as the courtier; his soldiers also, Tartar as well as Chinese, received largesses. There was a general emulation amongst all classes, to try who should be most worthy of the imperial generosity.

After all the bounty to be bestowed is set forth, the Emperor concludes with saying,— "Lo! now, on succeeding to the throne, I shall exert myself to give repose to millions of my people. Assist me to sustain the burthen laid

on my shoulders. With reverence, I receive charge of Heaven's great concerns."

Such gracious declarations usher in the reign of every prince; but how far the intentions of a new monarch to confer general benefits are realized, we are unable to say. The best and most praiseworthy resolutions often fall to the ground, because the members constituting the government possess neither honesty nor virtuous energy enough to carry out the designs; and by far the greater part remains a mere matter of form, put on record, as having been published in such a year and such a month.

As the day for celebrating the ceremony of Taou-kwang's ascending the throne approached, great were the preparations made; and the Board of Rites published a whole pamphlet upon the subject. It would be useless to repeat all the minutiæ; which can have attraction only for a Chinese. To a foreigner, the pageantry would be well worth seeing; because all the splendours that Asia can afford is displayed to most advantage by Chinese skill. There were elephants, horses, chariots, guards and servants, ministers and courtiers without

number; and the whole Imperial pageant present at Peking to do homage to their chief. It was indeed a crowded assembly—as gay as silks, satin, and embroidery, could make the mandarins. The important Act itself is prescribed in the following manner:—"The president of the Board of Rites shall step forward, kneel down, and beseech his Majesty to ascend the Imperial throne. The Emperor shall then rise from his seat, and the procession moving on in the same order, as above described, to the Imperial palace of peace, his Majesty shall ascend the seat of gems, and sit down in the Imperial throne, with his face towards the south. At the Woogah the bells shall then be rung, and the drums beaten." The proclamation is afterwards read, the seal delivered over; there is no end of kneeling and knocking the head, burning incense, and going through divers rites, until the paper prepared for the occasion is read in a loud voice.

When on the throne, Taou-kwang said,—"In consequence of all the kings, nobles, great statesmen, the civilians, and military officers, having said with one voice: Heaven's throne

must not long be unoccupied, it is incumbent that, by the consent of the imperial manes and the gods of the land, a sovereign do early assume the sway; I have yielded to the general voice, and interrupting for a short time my keen sorrow, I announce this circumstance to heaven and earth, and to my imperial ancestors, and sit down on the imperial throne. Let the next year be the first of the reign of Taou-kwang." *

According to the general custom observed for ages, in mourning for the deceased monarch, the shaving of the heads was generally prohibited, and all show of joy interdicted, for the period of one hundred days; during which time no marriage could take place, no music be played, no red paper be stuck up, no idol worshipped. The women in the harem laid aside their ornaments, and cut off their hair; and the Emperor himself built a hovel near the coffin of his father, to mourn there in sackcloth and in ashes. This ceased only for a short time, when the Emperor ascended the throne: he retired immediately afterwards to his former lonely cell, living then on rice and water,

* 1820.

to give an example of filial piety to the whole Empire. According to the strict rules of the country, this ought to last for three years; in this case, however, it was abridged for the public benefit, to prevent its interfering with the administration.

And now came the sunny days of accession to power. The silent, the pensive Taou-kwang, whom every one believed to be unfit for holding such a high station, began to look about in order to effect the necessary reforms. The harem had been made a place of abomination, and the vilest of womankind reigned there supreme; thither, therefore, the attention of Taou-kwang was first directed: he dismissed the women, allowing each to return to her parents and relations; there were few that had not earned large sums by the most nefarious traffic. The comedians, buffoons, and all that class were also discharged, and the whole establishment was cleared.

To give an example of continence, Taou-kwang confined himself, in his intercourse with the sex, to the woman of his choice, whom he had long before married; and he raised her to the dignity of Empress. There was, however, a more

important duty to be performed. The Empress-Dowager, who by her noble disinterestedness had contributed to Taou-kwang's elevation, was raised to the highest honours, and the Emperor himself came to pay her homage. This day was celebrated with very great pomp, and by a general amnesty to female delinquents: all women who had committed crimes were dismissed from prison, and proceedings against them stopped.

With the princes of the blood who had been hostile to him, Taou-kwang was very soon reconciled. He did not wish to take vengeance; but to restore harmony and peace; none were punished, none were molested: a rare example of generosity; for Taou-kwang's predecessors, without exception, had satiated their revenge on their accession. There were many who pined away in prison, and one of the first imperial acts was their liberation: several of them had, by long confinement, lost their reason, and others died soon after, in consequence of ill treatment.

And now Taou-kwang's care was directed to the government. The cabinet claimed his first care; and the removal of ministers, partly on

account of their age, partly for having been the creatures of his father, took place successively. But in these proceedings no violence or injustice was done. It had been customary, on the accession of a new emperor, to mulct the richest amongst them, and having done so, to draw up a register of their crimes, in order to condemn them to the utmost penalty. Now, the changes took place gradually, without the slightest vituperation.

The people, however, hoped that the famous Lung, once so celebrated as a statesman, and now banished from the Court, would again be called into power. This did not take place immediately; Taou-kwang disliked the man on account of his boisterous, imperious manners. When he was upbraided for neglecting such an excellent statesman, he simply remarked, that he was willing to receive advice; but would not, in this case, leave the intermeddler unpunished. Lung remained a month at the Court, and was then sent in charge of the pleasure-grounds of Gehol.

There are few adventurers who have lived such a chequered life as this courtier. He was always happy, always buoyant: no punish-

ment would cast him down entirely, no promotion or good fortune make him proud and overbearing. Profuse in his expenditure, always poor and harassed, he never took a farthing from the poor; nor did he in any manner encroach upon the rights of the people. This gave him great popularity; and whenever any calamity afflicted the country, it was to Lung to whom the people looked. He remained for some time at the pleasure-garden; perceiving, however, very soon that mere merit never proved sufficient to retain the Imperial favour, he managed to get a daughter into the harem; and having succeeded in this, he had a very strong advocate at Court.

In a short time he was made governor-general of the province Chih-le; a very high post, as Pekin is situated within its jurisdiction. He obtained quite the ascendancy in the cabinet, talked a good deal, and wrote still more: being given to hard drinking, he often appeared in the council-chamber with a napkin dipped in water round his head, to cool his cranium. He then was the soul of the ministry, discussing all the points with great volubility, giving much good advice, and proving

of some avail to Taou-kwang. But the Emperor wished to be free from vain interlocutors, and, therefore, availed himself of an opportunity to send this too powerful grandee to Ko-lo, to settle some quarrels there. Thus he was freed from Lung's presence, and began to breathe again.

Taou-kwang had a very great desire to reign alone. He had given orders always to wake him during the night whenever important matters required his presence. This seems now and then to have been done, and greatly contributed towards giving him a very great name for diligence in the administration of affairs. Yet all his efforts to be independent of his counsellors were in vain: he was not the man to stand alone; and though he always would have the name of being, in the fullest sense of the word, an autocrat, he was reduced to the necessity of relying upon others for advice. But his ministers were old men, incapable of taking a right view of the state of affairs, and too much accustomed to the arbitrary sway of his father; he, therefore, did not put much confidence in them, but leant on his youthful friends. Amongst the latter, we may mention Keying, the son of a minister

of state, and, by his sister's marriage, related with the Imperial house. He passed rapidly the examinations, and long remained at Court, as Meenning's companion, before there was the least expectation of his ever attaining to the Imperial dignity: the friends seemed to have been made for one another. Keying's first entrance upon public life, after having mastered three languages, was as superintendent of customs at Shan-hae-kwan. This put him in possession of money; and with this commodity much can be done in the capital. He returned to Peking some time after the accession of his friend, and then rose gradually step by step, from grade to grade. He is one of the few favourites who never abused his power either for the destruction of his enemies or for enriching himself. His father's family was very rich; and the young aspirant belonged to the most distinguished and influential Manchoo nobility. He was a man of peace, the adviser of conciliatory measures, individually sacrificing much to prevent an interruption of the good understanding between influential parties; and was venerated as such by the whole Court.

Of a wholly different stamp was Hegan, who possessed much talent for intrigue and mastery, and was a cunning sycophant by profession, with strong interest in the harem to support him. He was born a courtier; and hovered about Taou-kwang, flattering his vanity, offering suggestions, and acting with arbitrary power; quite independently of any other consideration, than to curry the favour of his sovereign. He for a long time held the highest office about the person of the monarch, possessed entirely his ear, and was a terror to the whole Court; for he was a dangerous man, ever ready to promote mischief and to get people into difficulties.

None resembled his master so much as Muhchangah; a man of the same phlegmatic, passive temperament, and equally undecided; speaking little, because he had few ideas, but able to cast his mind entirely into the mould of the Emperor's. The latter found, therefore, always an echo in his servant; with whom he spent most of his time. Muhchangah was a learned man in his way, reasoned as a Manchoo, and endeavoured by all means at his command to live only for one, whose shadow

he was. He had regularly risen in the way of examinations, and, like many youth of that period, remained unemployed; this procured him, however, an opportunity of gaining the friendship of Meenning. After having once or twice met, they became inseparable. Of all the statesmen of his time he kept longest in power; without the customary variation, so very common at the Chinese court, of being to-day a grandee, and to-morrow a mere hanger-on. Steady, like his own master, the latter must first have censured himself, before he could have condemned his fac-simile, the minister.

Keshen combined the courtier with the man of business; and in both capacities he stood unrivalled: even in the presence of a Metternich or a Talleyrand, he would have commanded respect. He was a man of the most polite, insinuating manners; who, with the utmost deference for the opinion of others, kept pertinaciously to his own; and whilst always appearing to yield, never gave up a single point. Such a character was exactly fitted to be a governor of the province in which the capital was situated. Inexhaustible in suggestions, comprehensive in his plans, with a keen eye for the

future, he might have passed for the Ulysses of the whole circle of faithful friends that surrounded the young Emperor. He had, however, two prominent faults—censoriousness and avarice—that outweighed many of his good and shining qualities. Constantly finding fault with his fellow-officers, high and low, he always appeared as their accuser, and wrote long and biting tirades against their administration. If he could bring upon them a heavy fine, he was indeed happy, and considered his end gained. Taou-kwang seems to have been aware of this weakness, and gave others an opportunity to denounce him; when he was fined in his turn. His love of money knew no bounds; and, in this respect, he resembled his master. Always grasping, never satisfied, accumulating wealth without an object, he yet lived a refined and luxurious life. None could come into his circle without being struck with the affability of his manners, and his penetrating look. How fascinating must he have been when in the company of his master! how rich his conversation, since he could mix the useful and pleasant; and how instructive his discourse! He had no claim to preferment; being a mere

Mongol noble, without a patron; but he became accidentally known to Meenning, and his fortune was made.

The very opposite of this great statesman was Elepoo; a man older than Taou-kwang, and in early life attached to his person. His whole character was that of straightforwardness, without blandishment: he had little talent, but great honesty of purpose; whenever this was wanted, he was the man. As he often spoke his mind freely, he gave frequent offence, and was repeatedly exiled to the provinces; where, however, he held high offices. Yet his master never took off his eye from his faithful servant; and when every one thought that he was forgotten, a summons was all at once issued to call him to the capital. There he was again treated with great respect, until his unconquerable uprightness brought on another rupture.

Alitsingah was throughout the official hero: the pains-taking, hard-working man; a lawyer and the counsellor in criminal cases. He belonged to the band that gathered around the prince, when there was no prospect of his ever succeeding to the throne. Yet the atmosphere of the Court was rather against his

constitution; he soon sickened, and was, therefore, frequently sent to the provinces. But when maturer years had given him a great desire for seeking repose, he reappeared in the Court circle, without having experienced the vicissitudes of a boisterous, unsteady, official life.

The very opposite in sentiment and practice was Lungwan; who was happy only when he could appear amongst the crowd of prostrate mandarins in the presence of Taou-kwang. He was truly attached to his master, and tasted with him all the sweets and bitters of intrigues. Being a man of few words, of firm disposition, and unshaken in all his purposes, he resembled in many respects his sovereign; who thought highly of him as a soldier, and kept him among his guards.

King-ching and Kwei-lin are two other stars that shone brightly amongst Taou-kwang's coterie. They were his Nestors: men of the executive, who never asked why or wherefore, but could be entrusted to carry out the supreme command, and act like machines. With them the imperial will was everything: they undertook anything required of them, and had no idea that human beings could be pro-

pelled by other more powerful agency. Long they remained the friends and confidants of the sovereign; and the disgrace into which they occasionally fell, was never of long duration.

Men like Yutac and Naurhing, who rose from the Manchoo stock, and had suffered something from Keaking's whims, were more particularly anxious to have a good situation and large emoluments; and to this end they made all their efforts subservient. The first, a scion of the Imperial house, was one of the few fortunate princes who were employed in the services of the State without giving rise to suspicion. King-ching was another who held many high offices, and, though he was not distinguished as a statesman, he seems to have had the patience of plodding through his work; from first to last he remained with his relative, and rendered many important services. Yutac worked his way through all difficulties; patient and forbearing, studying nothing but his own interest, and arriving at the acmé of all his desires.

In many respects resembling Taou-kwang, was prince Taou-hing. He had played with Meenning when he was a boy, had frequently

read with him, and pleased the prince by a similarity of disposition; he was much accustomed to consult Meenning's judgment, and thereby flattered his pride. Taou-kwang, when raised to power, laid great stress upon the learning of Taou-hing, and was not slow to reward his friendship by sundry important offices; but Taou-hing, though he never betrayed his trust, could not defend himself from the general imputation of incapacity for business.

Amongst the elder branches of his family Taou-kwang honoured his uncle Etsin-wang; who had suffered much under the preceding reign, and was taken from prison at his accession. He shewed very little capacity; for solitary confinement extinguishes the mental powers, but lived quietly in the palace, much honoured and respected, though undeservedly. His brother resembled Keaking in depravity of taste, and was once found guilty of a rape; the poor victim hanging herself from despair. Taou-kwang was thus forced to pronounce judgment upon him, and sentenced him to three years imprisonment. He died unknown and unregretted.

None was so much esteemed and consulted as Yih-shaou, Taou-kwang's cousin. An intimate acquaintance in youth, a similarity of pursuits and tastes, and a fervent desire to please one another, rendered their intercourse lasting. He was long at the head of the establishment of the princes—a most difficult situation, full of troubles and annoyance—and appears to have lived in the greatest intimacy with Taou-kwang. The highest honours the Emperor could bestow, that of Titular king, with large emoluments and a constant attention to his wishes, testified the imperial favour. He appears not to have possessed any shining qualities, but to have been one of those steady-going, easy men, who are very seldom roused from the tenor of an even life; and who, without giving themselves trouble to investigate the actual state of things, remain wedded to their own opinions to the last.

The favour shewn by the Emperor to Hwŭy-wang, his younger brother who ought to have reigned, was not misplaced. He seems to have been of an amiable disposition, combining with great quietness of manner, deep thought. Now and then Taou-kwang had some twinges of

jealousy; for the brother's dignified, statesman-like behaviour gained him a very strong party. He was then disgraced for a short time, and had to live far away from the sunshine of Court favour; but soon his rival proved a source of Taou-kwang's regret, and the intimacy of the brothers became still stronger. Hwuy-wang seems to have been the mentor of his brother for many years, and in several instances the counsellor who guided his course.

A very unworthy subject upon which Taou-kwang lavished great favour, was Yih-king. He had all the vices of an unbridled Tartar youth, with little knowledge of affairs, was a debauchee by habit, and too inert to enter upon any business with earnestness; yet the highest affairs were entrusted to his hands: he was looked upon as a paragon, and none dared to make known his faults, without irrevocably incurring the Emperor's displeasure. In the cabinet and in the camp he committed equal blunders; but remained for many years the darling of the Emperor.

Upon a still lower scale stood the nephew of the Emperor, Yih-shan—a proud and overbearing prince, without the slightest talent;

but always desirous of assuming pretensions to wisdom. He was much cherished, and arrived at all possible honours, till the incontrovertible proofs of his imbecility forced Taou-kwang to send him away from the capital.

Such were the most prominent characters that filled the Court. Though there was no soaring talent amongst them, no comprehensive judgment, still there were men of very solid qualities: and all were as serious as their master. The gaiety of the former reign was utterly banished, and the comedians became, as heretofore, an object of scorn. Taou-kwang did not wish to incur great expenditure, and forced his best friends to imitate his example: frugal in his table (though delicacies were sent him from all parts of the empire), moderate in dress, and extremely reluctant to part with a single farthing, his friends considered it fashionable to be equally stingy.

The ceremonies of the Court, though kept with very great strictness, were observed in the least expensive manner; in the cost of the table, in the pleasures and amusements, in the furniture of the palaces, yea, even in their repairs, the utmost economy was observed.

Taou-kwang was for amassing money: the solid substance of silver; and not, like his ancestors, for accumulating a number of valuable things, and putting them away only to be shown on festive occasions. He was poor enough when still a prince, because the purse of his imperial father had been always empty; he had learned to be content with little, and acquired the habit of making a small sum last a long while. Now, however, a passion for hoarding took possession of him, and to behold the shining metal was the most intense delight the Emperor could enjoy. His friends knew this, and never failed to be munificent in their presents. The quantity of sycee silver which he accumulated in the regular way, as well as by these gifts, was immense; and its being gradually withdrawn from circulation had a very detrimental effect upon the currency of the country, and occasioned great misery. Now, however, under the present Emperor, it stands a fair chance of taking wings.

Great difficulties were experienced in obtaining a grant of money from the public treasury; for there, also, the same economy was introduced; and when it was finally paid, it was with so many deductions, and such hard con-

ditions, that the receivers had reason to complain of their lot.

Taou-kwang himself held whatever he had once grasped, and but scantily supplied his servants with the means of procuring the very necessaries of life. Were a pleasure-garden in a state of dilapidation, or a palace nearly tumbling down, a number of officers went to report on the expenditure; and woe to the man who made too high an estimate: his favour was for ever gone. When the amount of expenditure was fairly made out, the payment of the money was put upon the shoulders of some person or other, under various pretences; and the Emperor himself advanced little on such occasions. None of his high functionaries ever escaped paying largely, in one shape or the other, for the favour they enjoyed. Did any of them fall under his displeasure, the first step was the confiscation of his property; even before a sentence was pronounced. The most intimate of his friends and companions had to go through this ordeal; and, though restored to favour, they never regained their previous property. It was, therefore, prudent to hide and make no

display of riches; for there would follow certain deprivation of the property, if it had once attracted Taou-kwang's attention. With this allowance, however, his avarice might be construed into economy; and it had, indeed, most beneficial consequences for the exhausted country: though, on the other hand, the example from such a high quarter did a great deal of mischief amongst the lower authorities.

Taou-kwang had, however, a natural sense of justice: he hated anything like made-up statements for the sake of effect; and, in all judicial proceedings, leaned towards clemency. So far as a Chinese emperor is able to investigate the true bearings of a case, he did his best to arrive at the truth; and always honoured his servants greatly for this sterling quality. He even could bear to be contradicted by them on this account, and publicly acknowledged whenever it was pointed out to him that he had not acted justly.

Taou-kwang was rather of a kind disposition, and his long residence amongst nefarious courtiers had by no means soured his temper. Just before the commencement of his reign there happened an earthquake, the sufferings

occasioned by which were very extensive. The Emperor was one of the foremost to relieve the destitute multitude; and on all similar occasions, when heavy calamities afflicted the land, he acted with equal paternal care: the only condition was, that it should cost him, personally, nothing.

Keaking had waged a long war against the sects; not that he objected to their tenets, but merely because he detested the very name: it was in him a mania; and the moment he heard the name, he was incensed with bitter resentment. Towards the close of his reign, however, he became finally convinced that the fiercer the persecution, the more likely were the people obstinately to adhere to their ideas. And after having bought this experience by shedding torrents of blood, he relaxed somewhat in this severe treatment. Upon Taoukwang the lesson was not lost; and he was deeply impressed with the absurdity of inflicting penalties, and perhaps death, upon a person who differed in his views, either political or religious, from the orthodox standard.

The Chinese are not a nation given to religious speculations; the principles they ad-

vocate are mostly of a politico-economical nature, and in many instances so absurd that they scarcely deserve repetition. It was the wish of the courtiers to try how far their new master would tread in the steps of the father; and they, therefore, accused three individuals of being Christians. Taou-kwang took no notice of these men; nor did he consider it necessary to enforce in any case the former punishments established against the introduction of Popery. From this principle of toleration he seldom deviated; and if his grandees acted otherwise, and quoted the penal statutes against these foreign intruders, it was not in accordance with his wishes.

The only sects that came under the lash of the law were those political associations which had for their object the overthrow of the existing government, or mere plunder and rapine. From time immemorial these have existed, and boldly defied the law; forming again, after being dispersed, and reappearing under another name, if the former was not safe. They have many times invaded the tranquillity of the country, and been denounced with all possible severity.

CHAPTER IV.

State of the country on Taou-kwang's accession.—Taou-kwang's private life.—Imperial palaces.—Taou-kwang's indifference to art.—Expulsion of the Portuguese.—Taou-kwang's dread of Western power.—Festivities of the Manchoos.—Favourite residence of the Emperor.—Ascendancy of the council of war.—Accessions of territory gained by Taou-kwang's ancestors.—Struggles for liberty of the Mahommedans.—Restrictions on commerce.—Rebellion of Tehangir.—Preparations for quelling it.—Disunion in Tehangir's army.—Triumph and subsequent cruelty of the Imperial troops.—Disastrous consequences of the rebellion.—Conduct of the Kaya of Kokonor.—Changes in the cabinet.—Disgrace of Yingho.—Elevation of Chung-ling.—Rising in Formosa.—Corrupt state of administration.—Rewards of robbers.—Destruction of the Black-caps.—Taou-kwang pays homage in the temple of his ancestors.—He enacts useful laws.—His poetic vein excited.

TAOU-KWANG'S accession was tranquil; we may almost say, unnoticed. All his grandsires, without exception, had to contend with great difficulties; not only amongst their relations, but likewise with the grandees and courtiers. But all those parties were hushed into silence

by the former tyrannical government, and every one expected relief from a most intolerable burden; there was thus no difficulty in uniting all hearts to one common purpose.

The state of the country was also very favourable for the young monarch. The people had left off constantly rising against the constituted authorities, and submitted themselves to a more humane rule, without murmur. The only exceptions were in Yunnan, amongst the mountaineers; and in some of the northern provinces, where starvation had made a very fearful inroad. All these unimportant oppositions were very soon silenced, however, and general tranquillity reigned throughout the land.

There had not for a long period been a time like the first four years of Taou-kwang's reign; so quiet, so tranquil, so void of all commotion. It was easy to sway the large empire, because there were no discordant elements to be brought in unison. The sea was free of pirates, and maritime trade rose to a height never known before; the arts of peace, and all the industry which this nation developes, appeared to the best advantage. When, now and then, a

river broke its embankments, or a wet year destroyed the crop, still the mass of the people did not suffer, but went on increasing in opulence. There is little recorded of this time; and this is always a proof that the passions of man must have been at rest, not to give rise to violent outbreaks, and thus furnish matter for historians.

Taou-kwang was fond of domestic enjoyments, and little relished the bustle of the court; but he was equally averse to leaving the capital and going upon a distant journey, like his ancestors, to hunt in Tartary. His favourite solitary abode was Yuen-ming-yuen, not far from the capital: the trees had been allowed to grow, the grass was very high, and it was indeed a rural spot, which few would have recognised as an imperial park. Thither the Emperor retired, to spend the time with his friends and some concubines; and there he was seen to glide solitarily through glades of trees; or, in company of some women, proceed in a boat along the miniature rivers. He was then lost to all the world; eunuchs guarding carefully the entrance, and all business being banished from these sacred precincts.

It does not seem that the Emperor engaged in any peculiar pursuit; his mind needed not to be constantly occupied, and required relaxation rather than incessant application. The eunuchs were the principal men who appeared before him, and they received his behests in a few words, often very unintelligible.

His ancestors had rendered these palaces abodes of art: there were beautiful paintings executed by European and Chinese masters, watches, clocks, &c. in hundreds; and the most beautiful pieces of workmanship that Europe could produce in very great abundance. Kanghi even had musical instruments placed about in the rooms, and amongst them beautiful spinets, which he touched now and then, to the astonishment of all present. There were at that time Europeans always in attendance, who explained the nature of the instruments, and repaired them whenever they were out of order. But the taste of Taou-kwang did not lie that way; so that the finest pieces of art were jumbled together in one great magazine, and many were broken or rotten ere the least notice was taken of them.

The last of the Portuguese remained only a

few years in the capital, at the board of astronomy, and were sent away in 1826. The only Europeans left behind were a few Russians. All the connection between the east and west was thus stopped, and a very strong retrograde movement again took place. It was, perhaps, more a dread of western power than any real aversion to the arts and sciences, which prompted Taou-kwang to the utter expulsion of all that had even the appearance of affinity to those distant countries. He did not hate the men, but he feared their ascendancy; persuading himself that their influence would prove subversive of his authority. These fears were by no means dispelled by subsequent events, yet this undefined dread also kept from the Emperor the knowledge which might have enabled him to avoid a collision with western powers.

The drunken orgies of his predecessor had entirely ceased; there was no longer the pageantry of comedians, and any festivity was of rare occurrence. It is the ancient custom of the Manchoos to assemble and eat meat without rice, to recall their origin of hunters; on which occasions an intoxicating liquor made of mare's

milk is drunk in great abundance. To such feasts the Emperor invited his grandees frequently. These were boisterous assemblies, and the greater the quantity of viands they could consume, the greater the respect they shewed towards the exalted host. During the repast they sang songs, descriptive of the union between all Manchoos, and pledged each other's fealty. Thus they spent many hours; and when the party broke up, they took to their houses the meat that was left. To be invited to the feast was a certain proof of the Emperor's favour; and only those whom he honoured as his confidential friends were admitted.

The Emperor very rarely visited Zehol, the favourite abode of Kanghi and Keènlung; for he liked to spend his time in and near the capital. On that famous artificial hill, within the precincts of the palace, which is surrounded by lakes, rivers, and rocks, all made by the imitative Chinese, most of his days were passed.

The attempt to rule alone had entirely miscarried; for the amount of business was so great, that it was an impossibility to attend to the most necessary transactions. This, then, was a favourable opportunity for Hegan, and others

of a similar stamp, to assume the control of affairs, and defeat the intentions of their opponents. The old ministers held only nominal rank, all actual measures being taken by favourites: the Emperor, though having a cabinet consisting of four principal and two assistant ministers, nevertheless, calls his council (Chinese Council of War, literally) at pleasure; and at this any one he chooses is admitted. All important affairs are then decided; and without the approbation of this council nothing can be done. The friends of Taou-kwang were installed in this place with supreme authority, and began there to direct the affairs of the Empire. The ascendancy of master spirits, before whom the Emperor bowed, prevented that contest and disunion which often mars the most salutary measures. These men were entrusted with power for better and for worse; and five years passed thus in comparative tranquillity.

The natural confines of the Chinese Empire present such strong barriers against foreign encroachments, that the country may be said to stand there protected by bulwarks strong and invincible. Since the Manchoos occupied

the throne, their native land, Manchooria, was also added to China; and subsequently, after a very hard struggle, Mongolia likewise. There the spirit of conquest ought to have paused, as it was dangerous to add other possessions to the already too vast Empire. Yet the Emperor thought differently, and Tibet gradually became a dependency. Keèn-lung, who wished to establish his fame, and to crush the Eleuths, a nation that had boldly resisted the arms of his grandsire, began, therefore, a very expensive and disastrous war in that country. No worldly advantage could accrue from it; still, notwithstanding the heavy losses, it was carried on. Unexpected events gave to the Chinese armies finally the victory, and the nomadic inhabitants of those tracts succumbed to the Manchoo sway.

About this time (1757) the Usbecks, to the south of the Teenshan, apprehending a similar fate to the Eleuths, who had been butchered in myriads, rose in open hostility against the Chinese. Thus the war was carried on far beyond its intended limits; and the Manchoo general did not stop until the Mahommedan cities, with Kashgan and Yarkand, were in

his possession. The cruelties practised on this occasion were unheard of; but Turkistan was also subjected to Keènlung's sceptre.

Nothing could have been so unwise as to extend the Chinese territory beyond its natural boundary; and as soon as the Usbecks had recovered from their panic, they revenged themselves upon their oppressors.

Such had been the case already, during the reign of Taou-kwang's grandsire, when the rebellion was quenched by torrents of blood; and under his own administration, another more fearful struggle for liberty commenced, of which the issue for some time was very dubious.

The fanaticism of the Mohammedans had been roused to madness; it became a holy war against idolaters, whom it was the greatest dishonour to serve. But the Chinese came with overwhelming forces; treason lurked amongst the Usbecks; their chiefs were delivered over to the barbarity of the Manchoos, and their army, in a very short time, annihilated. Yet the fire was thereby not yet extinguished: it smouldered long under the ashes.

One great cause of general disaffection, was

the restrictions imposed on commerce. The western Bucharians and other nations are fond of tea, and dress themselves on festive occasions in Chinese silks. A great trade had sprung up, much to the advantage of all parties; but the Chinese custom-house officers practised such monstrous extortions, that it was impossible to derive much profit from the traffic. The evasions and bribes were many; but the Chinese government thought that to restrict the commerce would be to secure the frontier. It was even in contemplation to prohibit it entirely, and cut off all connection with the west.

A number of native merchants had, however, been accustomed to visit in their travels the adjacent countries, and were still more inflamed against the infidel rulers by their fellow-believers. All the combustibles for a tremendous explosion had long ago been collected; a conspiracy was ably arranged, and the leader was only wanting. This man was soon found in Tehangir, a descendant of one of the former Princes, who was driven from his home and possessions by the Manchoos. He had lived alternately at Bokhara and

with the Kokand chief, and watched the opportunity for regaining his patrimony. In 1826, he had assembled round him a number of desperate Turkomans and vagabonds of all nations; and, favoured by his host, the Kokand ruler, he forthwith penetrated by the valley of Syr, and proclaimed himself the deliverer of the Faithful. The idolatrous conquerors he had devoted to the sword; to the believer, he promised a happy state of independence, and freedom from oppression; to all, he wished to be a benignant ruler.

The first attempt of Tehangir, however, did not prove very successful; and he had to retreat towards Bodakshai: where, fortunately for his cause, the mandarins had driven the Mahommedans to despair by their oppression. There remained nothing for them but to rise in open rebellion, and to join the standard of their fellow-believers. With this exasperated crowd, Tehangir attacked Cashgar, took the place, and killed all the Chinese and Manchoo inhabitants whom he could capture. As soon as the Kaja, or chief of Kokand heard this, he instantly came with his bands to share in the plunder; and assisted, likewise, in the capture of two

cities. But he was a faithless ally, merely instigated by sordid self-interest, and left his friend as soon as he conceived it politic to advocate the Manchoo cause, to promote his advantage.

Tehangir, in the mean while, exulting in his good success; became overbearing in his conduct, and harsh towards his adherents: instead of the liberty he had promised, another era of servitude seemed to have begun.

The postal establishment of the Chinese government is of the best description: couriers traverse the desert, and the most inhospitable regions, with incredible velocity; so that scarcely twenty days had elapsed, when the disaster was known to its full extent in Peking. Every one now expected that Taoukwang would take the field in person: he had when a prince been fond of military parade, drill, and exercise, and it was generally anticipated that he would put in practice what he had studied with so great attention in youth. But the disappointment was great, when the generals who were to march against the rebels were nominated, and a very large army appointed to proceed directly to the seat of insurrection.

Taou-kwang shewed great ability in assembling the army; worked day and night to render it effective; and, in order to procure supplies sufficient for the enterprise, he insisted that all corporations and wealthy individuals should offer patriotic gifts on the altar of the fatherland: a measure to which he had had constantly recourse throughout his reign. The Hong merchants, at Canton, paid most on this occasion. It was found that the army cost, on an average, 23,000*l.* of our sterling money per day; and that it must lead to national bankruptcy, if all the resources of the country were not put into requisition to meet the exigency.

The army, a most motley group of tribes and nations, with a great preponderance of the scum of the people, was finally set in motion. The march through the desert beyond Hamé was most disastrous; men and cattle died of want, and the commissariat proved very defective.

Had Tehangir awaited the disheartened, half-starved remnant of the Chinese forces at the passes of the Teenshan, which led into Turkistan, he would have been able to annihilate

the whole; but he delayed, and lost this golden opportunity. The troops refreshed themselves in the few cities that remained faithful to the Chinese, and the contest now commenced.

On the banks of the Turim river, which traverses the whole breadth of the country, the great battle was fought; and 60,000 men met there in mortal strife. It does not appear that the Usbecks made a desperate stand: their forces had been weakened by desertion; and, even in the hour of need, the mutual hatred between the black and white caps—two distinguishing marks of the Mahommedans in those regions—could not be forgotten. The former detested Tehangir, and rejoiced at his misfortune.

Various other engagements took place, of which we have only the statements of Chinese writers, who never fail to report victories. Tehangir kept them long at bay; the imperial forces had to be considerably increased, and new sums of money to be sent: no less than 10,000 camels were employed in carrying provisions to the army. The Emperor was weary of a war that could only entail loss and never afford any advantage; he, therefore, ordered

that no money should be spared to seize the rebel leader, either dead or alive.

From that moment a system of treachery commenced, which robbed Tehangir of his best friends. The four cities he had taken were lost, and he became again a fugitive. When Taou-kwang heard of the surrender of Kashgar, he wept for joy. What bribery could not effect, cruelty was to accomplish; the Manchoos murdered, without any remorse, all that came before them, women and children not excepted. In one victory, an officer, whose relation had fallen in battle, sacrificed four prisoners to his manes. It was a war of extermination: nevertheless, the black caps supported it with all their might. In various battles the Usbecks again retrieved their ill fortune; and if they had had a settled plan, a common rallying point, or even an arsenal at their disposal, they would have gained the day in the end. But they were without any assistance, and even not united amongst themselves.

When Tehangir, who belonged to the Altktak (white caps), saw all was lost, he implored the assistance of the Poolootih Mahom-

medans, in 1827. He might have long maintained a running warfare, and wearied out the Chinese forces, if a traitor, named Isaak, who belonged to the adverse faction of the Karatak (black caps), had not surrendered Tehangir into the hands of the Manchoos. He was taken to Pekin, and there cut to pieces in the presence of Taou-kwang; his relations were exiled, and some took refuge amongst the Kirghis; who refused to deliver them up on any terms, because they were their guests.

The whole of Turkistan was nearly converted into a desert, and misery reigned everywhere; China had lost many million ounces of silver, without reaping any advantage; and the only gainer in the whole affair was the treacherous Kaja of Kokand. After having plundered both friend and foe, he came to an agreement with the Manchoos that they should pay him a round sum; that he should be the umpire in all differences between the Usbeck, take the lead in religious questions, and collect a certain sum of money from the caravans on their way to Turkistan.

Taou-kwang was obliged to make changes

in his cabinet during the war, because the ministers were not agreed upon some points. There was a proposition made to open the silver mines in the neighbourhood of the capital; but the great mover in this matter, the assistant Manchoo minister, Yingho, was finally accused of having obtruded visionary schemes upon his sovereign, and dismissed with disgrace.

The most daring in the whole war was Chung-ling. He was subsequently made a member of the cabinet, and entrusted with the management of the campaign. His whole conduct seems to have been that of a consummate general; and he was therefore subsequently, by degrees, raised to the premiership, the highest rank of nobility was conferred on him, and everything was done to shew the high estimation in which he was held by the monarch. Though a Mongol by birth, the Emperor treated him as one of his own relatives, and Chung-ling became henceforth the man to whom he looked for advice in all matters of importance. Several generals who distinguished themselves in the war, became subsequently famous for their conduct when coming in contact with the English: amongst

others may be mentioned, Yu-po-yun, Yang-fang, and Hoochaou.

Simultaneously with this event, occurred a rising in Formosa: a very hot-bed of rebellion, because the refuse population of the opposite Chinese coast took refuge there as emigrants. Both risings left an empty treasury, which was to be filled by patriotic gifts; and these were again called forth by promises of emoluments and offices to the liberal donors.

It was not the first time that the government had had recourse to this expedient; but now the practice, reduced to a complete system, exercised a most baneful influence upon the State: it made everything vendible, and put men into office whose sole endeavour was to reimburse themselves for their outlay, with interest. Not only did money become the sole mover of all enterprises; but every other acquisition and accomplishment lost their value. The great scholars of China, who had pored over ancient books, and stood high for their attainments in literature, had very little chance of promotion, if they had not also cash to support their claims. The whole administration thus became radically changed, a new set

of men was introduced, and a spirit, which prevails at the present day, gradually sprang up: it was only the greedy, grasping, bribing, and tricking officer that ever could look for advancement.

The rewards bestowed upon all those who during the Turkistan war had distinguished themselves, extended even to the convicts; who had been sent thither from all parts of China, and rendered very great services by kidnapping enemies, or betraying them into the hands of their employers. They received buttons and peacocks' feathers, and obtained permission to return to their native places; where they proved, in many instances, a plague to their countrymen, by resuming their former profession of thieves and robbers. Others obtained more substantial rewards; especially the Usbecks (black caps), who had so greatly contributed towards the defeat of the rebels. A great number of them became officers in the Chinese army, others rose to high distinction in their native country, and all the important offices devolved upon them; whilst their antagonists could only rise to the rank of Imaums.

Taou-kwang was prompted, by flatterers to give to his reign a more high-sounding title on account of this victory; but he was too sensible to follow such advice. On the contrary, he proceeded to the temple of his ancestors, and there paid homage; for to their propitious influence he ascribed his success. His adopted mother also received her share of praise; and he shewed peculiar honour to his uncle, a man far advanced in years. Thus, having performed his filial duties, he enacted many excellent laws respecting the future government of Turkistan; and finally adopted the reasonable proposition of attaching the people through kindness, and not driving them again to rebellion by vexatious regulations. But twenty Usbecks had first to suffer decapitation, for having transgressed the law, ere the Emperor could come to this result.

The success in the war awoke in the otherwise prosaic Taou-kwang the poetical vein, and he actually composed stanzas about the Tsing dynasty and the Manchoo victories, which were duly printed and blazoned forth as great masterpieces.

CHAPTER V.

Tomb of the Emperor.—Of his mother and wife.—Taou-kwang's pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors.—His deportment amongst his countrymen.—His bounty.—His predilection.—Earthquake at Honan.—Effect upon the Emperor.—Overflowing of the Yang-tse-kiang, and consequent distress of the people.—Energy of Taou-kwang on the occasion.—Conduct of the Government.—Irruption of the mountaineers of Hae-man.—Rebellion of the Andeganos.—Disgrace of Chang-ling.—Quarrel between the Emperor and his son, and death of the latter.—Illness of Taou-kwang.—Hwuy-wang appointed his successor.—Death of Taou-kwang's wife, and his grief.

PECULIAR stress is laid by the Chinese upon the exact spot of their burial; and to make a proper choice of the same, no labour is spared, no expense grudged. There are professors of the art—which has received the name of Fŭng-Shwey, or, wind and water—whose sole business it is to find out the propitious piece of ground desired. But months often elapse before even such a diligent individual can come to results satisfactory to himself and his em-

ployers; and the greatest eulogy to be bestowed upon him is, that he has worn out a pair of hob-nailed shoes in the search. Much investigation must take place before an Emperor can erect a mausoleum for himself; which is generally done during his lifetime: the coffin is also prepared, while he is still hale and strong, to receive his last remains.

To be very certain in this particular, Taoukwang sent his minister, and a celebrated doctor of this wonderful science, to make the needful search. They did not betray their trust; but, after long and anxious investigation, the identical spot where the tomb ought to be erected was finally discovered, and the work begun in good earnest. This, however, only prepared the downfall of the minister; for water collected in the hole that had been dug, and the ground proved to be entirely unfit for a burial-place. The unfortunate statesman was, consequently, doomed by the exasperated monarch to exile, on the borders of the Amour, near Siberia; there to spend the few remaining days of his life amidst snow and ice. The grave of the Emperor's departed mother was, however, chosen with greater care; the diggers

first making a hole, and waiting for a long time to see whether any water would collect. Similar precautions were also taken when subsequently selecting a spot for the grave of his wife.

There was still a very pious act to be performed by the dutiful Emperor,—his pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors; a duty which devolves upon every Chinese monarch. The consultations upon this subject had been manifold; there being always a lurking dread, that during his absence some bold usurper might seize upon the government. The Emperor, therefore, proceeds thither at the head of an army. The Astronomical, or rather Astrological Board, must first calculate the propitious month, day, hour, and even minute, when the stars will benignantly shine upon the Great Emperor; and when this is ascertained beyond all doubt, the cavalcade proceeds: the temporary administration of government meanwhile having been entrusted to the most excellent personages who can be depended upon.

There were no less than two thousand camels in the train; the princes of the blood, several beauties of the harem, and the favourite minis-

ters, all joined the procession. The road leads through very uncultivated spots, and is often impassable; so that even an emperor cannot travel without being subject to great fatigues. Preparations of every description had been made beforehand; sheds and wooden houses were erected where no villages are to be found: still Taou-kwang, with his whole Court, had often to encamp under tents.

Along the whole journey the people crowded in thousands to see their monarch. In Peking such liberties are severely punished; and the streets through which the imperial cavalcade wends its way are empty and silent as death: none dare look up to the Great Emperor, unless specially allowed by his rank to behold the dragon-face. In the country, however, the same formality could not be observed; and some Chinese even went so far as to present petitions; but Taou-kwang could not brook such liberties, and had recourse to punishments to deter others from approaching his person.

After many days he arrived in Moukden; an insignificant place, which owes its celebrity to the first establishment of Manchoo power,

and is, therefore, considered as a sacred spot. It has all the tribunals and institutions of Peking in miniature; the most celebrated establishment, however, is that of the ancestral tombs. These are kept in good repair, well guarded, and have always a considerable garrison, to keep watch that the abode of the Imperial manes be not desecrated.

Taou-kwang during this time shewed himself quite the family man: they were his dear countrymen amongst whom he spent his time; his friends, his relations. Laying, therefore, all formality and imperial pride aside, he hastened as a poor pilgrim to the shrine of the mausoleums, to prostrate himself there. This he did repeatedly; acknowledging his utter insufficiency to emulate the virtues of his ancestors. Thousands and thousands followed his example; especially his own numerous kith and kin, who did so as in duty bound.

When all ceremonies were performed, the Emperor looked about for some deserving subjects upon whom to shew his favour, and singled out the descendants of some of his most meritorious officers, who contributed most materially to his conquests. They received three-eyed

peacock feathers; the highest distinction an emperor of China can confer.

Great numbers of poor and proud noblemen live in and near the city, who are entirely destitute; for they have no inclination to labour, and if they do so they lose caste. Towards these the Emperor was very bountiful, and gave large sums of money to relieve them from their pecuniary difficulties.

When he had everywhere liberally bestowed his gifts, he left, moreover, one million taels behind in the treasury, to enable the government to make any profitable improvement that might be deemed necessary. Having thus spread happiness and joy everywhere around, he bent his steps home, to take again upon himself the cares of governing a great country. His predilection for his ancestral domain was always very great; and he often made, subsequently, great sacrifices to promote its prosperity.

Thus, all had been joy and contentment; but there happened, soon after Taou-kwang's return to Peking, an event which left a very deep impression upon his mind, and filled him with sad forebodings. An earthquake in Honan extended its shocks to the very capital.

Many thousands of people were crushed under the ruins of their dwellings; others sank with the earth into an abyss. The Emperor fan cied he could hear the stifled cries of his subjects in their last agonies; and this idea profoundly afflicted his soul: he trembled at the very thought that men should be buried alive; and shut himself up for three days, without admitting any person to see him, to give full vent to his unbridled grief.

Shortly afterwards, the Yang-tze-keang broke its bounds, and overflowed the country round Nanking. Many persons were drowned, for the water came very suddenly; the harvest was also destroyed, and the misery, consequently, very severe. Under these pressures Taou-kwang shewed great energy to relieve the distress, and to obliterate the traces of the calamity. Much was paid and done to rescue people from absolute starvation, and to keep up the drooping spirits of the multitude. In this respect the Emperor endeavoured to maintain the character of "father of his country," and to impress the minds of the people with the deepest veneration for his name.

The Chinese government has adopted the

plan always to keep a large quantity of grain in its storehouses, at the cost of the people, to be prepared for emergencies. On this occasion, however, the rice had to be brought from a great distance, and ere it could reach the place of its destination, thousands had already died of hunger; when it arrived, however, it was boiled in large kettles, and every poor starving man received a sufficient quantity of soup to satisfy his craving appetite. In the spring, government issued seed corn; exacting, however, the promise of repayment.

Amongst the minor troubles that disturbed the mind of the Emperor, we may mention an irruption of the mountaineers of Haenan; who plundered the peaceful Chinese, and committed very great atrocities. The soldiers sent against them were beaten back, and the consternation on account of this defeat was very great amongst all the Chinese colonists; who are very industrious people, busily engaged in fisheries, trade, and agriculture, peaceful and timid. The governor-general of Kwang-tung was finally obliged to yield to the earnest request of the islanders, and come in person to put down the disturbance. He did this finally very effec-

tually, and reaped great advantages from his interference; for the aborigines were driven back to their mountains, and never afterwards disturbed the thriving settlers.

Much worse were the affairs in Turkistan, in 1830. There, new troubles had arisen, on account of the restrictive commercial system carried out by the frontier authorities; and this time a race called the Andigans were the aggressors. As the number of dissatisfied people is there very great, it was very easy to gather a great crowd, and fall upon the unwary Manchoo commander. The forces were scattered in a short time; and the rebels laid siege to Yarkand, which is the principal city in the south, and the great emporium for the Indian trade. There, however, a brave general, Chang-pe, commanded; who boldly opposed the attacking forces, withstood their assaults for a long time, was himself the foremost in the hour of danger, and behaved manfully in everything.

Taou-kwang, foreseeing the disasters that must ensue if the most vigorous measures were not instantly taken, sent 4,000 camels and two millions of taels in silver to settle

matters; instead, however, of waging a long and destructive war, and consuming the very marrow of the State, great bribes were administered, peace was bought, and the whole matter hushed up. It was never generally known in what way the differences had been removed, but they were much sooner put a stop to than in the first instance.

Chang-ling, the veteran hero, who was again sent to quell the new insurrection, returned; but only to be accused of heavy crimes, and to lose the influence which he possessed as second minister of the cabinet. Taou-kwang saw too late the erroneous policy of extending the Empire beyond its natural boundaries, and deeply regretted having committed the blunder: but it was now too late.

The Emperor had several children born to him; amongst others a son, who had now reached (1831) his twentieth year. He was the heir-presumptive, as many believed; and proud, perhaps, of his high destiny, he gave offence to his father. A quarrel ensued, in which it is said the Emperor lost his temper, and gave personally, with his own hand, a chastisement to the prince. The young man was

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infected with the vice of opium-smoking, at that time very common in the harem, and died from the consequences of it. This occasioned many evil rumours, and Taou-kwang was himself accused of being the murderer of his child; though there is certain evidence to prove that he was almost inconsolable at his death. His mind was partly relieved by the report that two Chinese concubines had borne him two sons (one the present Emperor Hien Fung, born in Sept. 1831), to be a support in his declining years.

The shock, however, was too great for the Emperor: he fell sick of a very serious disorder, his life was despaired of, and his brother, Hwuy-wang, fixed upon as his successor: the very prince who at his accession was too young to be entrusted with the cares of the State. A strong faction was formed at the Court in favour of this prince, who had a great name for sagacity and moderation; but the spell was soon dissolved by the recovery of the Sovereign, who hence conceived a great dislike towards the competitor, and repeatedly degraded him.

This was not, however, the only misfortune

that befel Taou-kwang: one much more deeply felt by him was the loss of his spouse, in whom all his affections were centered. He had loved and esteemed her when still a prince, and he shared with her all the imperial pomp. This event happened not long after the celebration of his fiftieth birth-day, when he was just recovering from his malady. He seemed to be stupified by this bereavement, and withdrew for some time from public business, and indulged his grief. When he was at length roused from his lethargy by the ministers, he was so indignant at their intrusion that he disgraced them all.

CHAPTER VI.

Rebellion of mountaineers.—Defeat of Le, and his consequent disgrace and banishment.—Hegan despatched against the rebels.—His success.—Reward of the successful commanders.—Frequent occurrence of rebellion.—Cruelty of the government.—Rebellion in Shantung—Policy of the government.—Trade society.—Persecution of the Christians.—Opposition of the Emperor to it.—Reproach passed on the government.—Prosperity of the country.—Frequent famine.—Policy of the Mandarins respecting it.—Direful consequences.—Taou-kwang's fondness for punctilio.—His devotion.—Second wife of the Emperor.—Her character and pursuits.—Her influence on State affairs.—Chinese contempt for female government.—Attachment of the Emperor to his second wife.—Prosperity of the country under her influence.—Emperor's neglect of her, and her death.—Law passed against the interference of eunuchs in State affairs.—Changes in the Cabinet.—Rise of Yuen-yuen.—Retirement of Lung and Chang-ling.—Business of the Cabinet.—Dependence of ministers on the Emperor's favour.

BETWEEN the provinces of Hoonan, Kwang-se, and Kwang-tung, are very high mountains, for the most part inaccessible; which are in-

habited by a race of aborigines, brave and determined, rude and free. They have resisted successfully the whole power which the mandarins could bring against them; for they are good archers, and in their mountains invincible. The mandarins are very strict against them, and by their conduct often irritate them to such a degree that the mountaineers take dire revenge upon their oppressors. Whenever they are unruly, Government prohibits the importation of salt, to force them, by withholding this necessary of life, to submission.

In 1832 one of the chiefs, in a strange frenzy, declared himself Emperor of China, and sped down the mountains to lay the whole lowlands waste. There were, perhaps, some other causes that led to this outbreak; which, however, have never been made known.

The soldiers sent against these mountaineers were beaten, and a division led by a Manchoo was likewise nearly annihilated in a mountain defile, into which he had been inveigled; the terror grew in the same measure as the imperial forces were scattered.

In this emergency the Emperor commanded Le, the governor-general of Kwang-tung and

Kwang-se, who had also a seat in the cabinet as assistant-minister, to lead forward his troops to victory, and exterminate the rebels with one fell swoop. He accordingly commenced a toilsome march, but saw, with great concern, that two hundred of his one thousand warriors were so debilitated by opium-smoking that they had to be left behind. A number of them also asked leave of absence, on the plea that they had to attend to their old mothers at home; and, according to Chinese law, were allowed to return, with a few blows awarded them as cowards.

Le, though commander-in-chief, had never commanded a single company, still less an army; but, as the creed of the Chinese goes far to assert that whosoever has read the books of Kung-foo-tze is capable to undertake anything, the most renowned literary characters are also considered the greatest generals. High hopes were, therefore, entertained of Le; who, forthwith, to make an end of the affair, advanced deep into the mountains. This was just what the miao-tse wanted. For a long while not a single enemy was seen; on a sudden, however, during the night, the whole Chinese

force was surrounded, and attacked on all sides. To make matters worse, a great quantity of gunpowder accidentally exploded, by which many warriors lost their lives. This caused much consternation, and the Chinese heroes were obliged fairly to retreat as fast as possible; for arrows flew from every hiding-place.

Such a misfortune as this rendered the governor wretched: he had no hope of retrieving his losses; the soldiers rose in open mutiny against him, because he would not ask for rewards sufficiently to indemnify the relatives of the fallen; and the grandee was finally denounced as unfit to serve his imperial Majesty any longer. His sentence was, to be transported for life; which he, with all his cunning and bribes, could not avert: he wandered in exile with his family, and was afterwards never heard of. Yet he was a most adroit man, and had powerful friends who held the highest offices; and, moreover, he possessed access to the imperial ear.

Taou-kwang very soon perceived that iron and steel would not do the work against the barbarians; he, therefore, despatched Hegan, his trusty servant, as commissioner; who

having a short time before been in disgrace, had now an opportunity offered to retrieve his character. He did not come with soldiers, but money: with imperial warrants, high promises, and judges, to settle the whole strife by the civil power. There could be nothing more unwarlike than this expedition; yet it was the best calculated to answer the end.

Other troops advanced from the side of Hoonan. They were, according to their own account, successful enough; for they took two cities of the miao-tse, and burnt the houses down. Then appeared Hegan with plenipotentiary powers, announcing dire vengeance on all who would not instantly submit. Emissaries were at the same time sent to effect the surrender of the leading rebel, and of some of his adherents. Upon this, nine hundred thousand ounces of silver were paid to buy a peace; on which the mountaineers agreed to let the Chinese forces withdraw unmolested.

The chief who had occasioned so much trouble, and assumed the name of Golden Dragon, was, with some others, sent to Peking, and there cut to pieces; their heads being carried about in triumph through the

city, as a trophy of the glorious conquest just obtained. The whole was magnified into a victory, officially reported, and an imperial rescript was obtained to bestow rewards on the generals; the Emperor being very liberal with tobacco-pouches, bow-rings, and peacock feathers, which were freely bestowed on the fortunate commanders.

Thus the rebellion was extinguished. But the miao-tse retained all their liberties, and maintained them also with a powerful hand. The mandarins endeavoured to build castles, in order to coerce the refractory mountaineers; but these forts they pulled down with indignation, and it was intimated that if the authorities wished to remain in peace, they must not interfere with their affairs.

China is a very extensive empire; and though the whole nation uses the same character to express its ideas, and obeys the same Sage in its institutions, still there is frequent collision, strife, war, and rebellion. Foreigners, who know nothing about the internal state of the country, are apt to imagine that there reigns lasting peace. Nothing is, however, more erroneous: insurrections of villages, cities,

and districts, are of frequent occurrence. The refractory spirit of the people, the oppression and embezzlement of the mandarins, and other causes, such as dearth and demagogues, frequently cause an unexpected revolt. In these cases, the destruction of property and hostility against the rulers of the land (especially if these have been tyrants) is often carried to great excess: there are instances of the infuriated mob broiling their magistrates over a slow fire. On the other hand, the cruelty of government, when victorious, knows no bounds: the treatment of political prisoners is really so shocking as to be incredible, if one had not been an eye-witness of these inhuman deeds.

Since 1831 several insurrections occurred in the northern provinces, and in Se-chuen. The worst of these was in Shan-tung, where a priest of the Tao sect headed the rebels. He had gained many adherents, and might have proved formidable, if the system of bribing had not been found efficacious. It was, throughout, the policy of the government to set the leaders against each other by administering suitable bribes; and then, when their cupidity had been

inflamed, to induce them to betray one another. In this manner protracted civil wars, like those under the reign of Keaking, were avoided, and a revolt was very soon quelled.

Secret societies again obtained the credit for being at the bottom of all the mischief: the Tien-tee-Hwuy, or Triad Society, to appear patriotic, would still talk about the usurpation of the Manchoos, and incite the people to shake off the yoke. These efforts, however, were very feeble, the plans badly concerted, and amongst all their political professions, there lurked always a very strong desire to rob; vagabonds like these, therefore, were very soon put down, and the government recovered its ascendancy.

On many occasions the mandarins wreaked their vengeance upon the Christians, whom they included amongst the dangerous sects. Local persecutions were set on foot; and European missionaries not rarely suffered death. The Emperor, however, never approved of these proceedings, and in some instances put a stop to them.

A very undeserved reproach was passed on Taou-kwang's government: the people

asserted that not a single year had passed without calamity, or some untoward event. Speaking by comparison, however, as everything in this sublunary world is changeable, the whole course of events did not exhibit extraordinary calamities; and there was more prosperity amongst the nation than during preceding reigns. The trade by sea flourished considerably, foreign commerce increased rapidly, and all over China property was generally secure: still it would be difficult to point out a single year during which some local misfortune or the other had not befallen the land.

One of the most common evils in China is starvation. The population is very dense; the means of subsistence are, in ordinary times, frequently not above the demand; and it is, therefore, nothing extraordinary to witness, on the least failure of the crop, utter wretchedness and misery. To provide for all the hungry mouths is impossible; and the cruel policy of the mandarins carries their indifference so far, as to affirm that hunger is requisite to thin the dense masses of people.

Whenever such a judgment has come upon

the land, and the people are in want of the necessaries of life, dreadful disorders soon arise, and the most powerful government would not be able to put down the rising and robberies which are committed on the strength of the prevailing misery. There seems to be a total change in the peaceful nature of the inhabitants, and many a patient labourer turns fiercely upon his rich neighbour, like a wolf or a tiger, to devour his substance.

No one can have an idea of the anarchy which on such occasions ensues, and the utter demoralization of the people. Yet as soon as relief is afforded, and a rich harvest promises fair, the spirit of order again prevails, and outrages are put a stop to. The people then combine, arm themselves, and proceed in thousands to catch marauders like wild beasts. No mercy is shewn on such occasions, and the mandarins, on account of their weakness, cannot interfere. Scenes of this description very often occurred, without giving rise to severe reflection on the character of Taoukwang's administration.

Minds like those of the Emperor are very fond of punctilio, and what they are wanting

in of ideas they supply in etiquette and forms. No one was more attentive to these points than Taou-kwang. Early and late he was at the appointed hour in the council. The temples were not forgotten, for he had very much the character of a devotee. He was absent on no festive occasion; and, especially when threatened calamities seemed to be near at hand, he was very careful in the performance of his duties: if no rain had fallen for many months, he might be seen in sackcloth, like a common penitent, approaching the idols, imploring them to look down upon the nation for whom he interceded. He went through the regular fasting and preparations; and, not to be behind, he often appeared at the altar to perform the duties of a high priest. In all things he was ready to give an example to the whole nation of a stately pagan worship. With the Dalai Lama he had frequent intercourse, and received from his sainted hands rosaries, images, candles, and incense-sticks, which that high priest had blessed. Taou-kwang was fond of making a grant of these idolatrous objects to his favourites, on whom he thus inculcated the duties towards images.

How grievous must it be to Christians, to see themselves outdone by a heathen potentate, overwhelmed with cares, and steeped in the lowest and most despicable superstition, for which he finds always time, amidst a turmoil of constant, important occupation! Should we not be more frequently found at the footstool of our Saviour, than these besotted heathen at the shrine of their demons?

Taou-kwang was still mourning on account of the death of his consort, with whom he had enjoyed for twenty-six years connubial bliss, when a beautiful woman, with the highest accomplishments, drew upon herself his choice as second Empress. She was a Manchoo maiden, who, instead of whiling away her time in frivolous pursuits, had betaken herself to literature, and studied statistics. Being acquainted with all the details of government, she filled her now exalted sphere with much dignity. She knew how little judgment her husband possessed, how unable he was to sway the Empire; and she resolved forthwith to become his proxy, without appearing so.

The Chinese look upon the government of women as the worst slavery, and would never

allow any to assume supreme authority. The lady, therefore, instead of ostensibly meddling in politics, lived in the innermost recesses of the harem, and directed the whole machinery with consummate skill. There was not a single important measure in contemplation, of which she did not previously receive notice. The attachment of her husband to her was unbounded, and she used this power for the weal of the country, to guide his steps. The most distinguished statesmen were recommended by her to his choice; and all proceedings were so arranged that they answered this end.

No period during his whole reign shewed so much vigour and activity. The new men she chose, and the measures which she put into operation, proved efficient, and from one end of the Empire to the other her beneficial yet invisible power was felt. She was for years the guardian angel of the Empire: the faithful, affectionate counsellor of the Emperor, and the mother of the country: for in works of benevolence she shone conspicuous. Yet she never usurped power; never obtruded herself; never kept favourites to promote them

to high offices. Thus she was a powerful aid to her august spouse for about six years; incessantly occupied with the welfare of the nation, and never giving any occasion for slander to say that she held the reins of government.

Unfortunately, she had no children; and another woman more beautiful than she herself being put in the way of her husband, he fell in love, neglected his faithful and affectionate wife, and caused her death by his indifference.

She is the only female, during the whole reign of Taou-Kwang, who is known to have exercised political influence. In former dynasties the harem had frequently been the cabinet, and eunuchs and women the ministers. But the Manchoos, who ascribed to that circumstance the downfall of their predecessors, had erected an iron tablet on which an eternal law was engraven, declaring that eunuchs should never be employed in any official capacity. Though women were not mentioned, yet the proscription likewise included them; and they were also debarred at first from exercising their fascinations for political purposes. Instances of this description are,

therefore, extremely rare; and it is more difficult still to find a woman who made use of her power with such judgment and rectitude as the late Empress.

Great changes took place in the Cabinet on the new Empress arriving at her high dignity. The old statesmen, who were mere cyphers, had to make room for more enterprising men; and Muchangah and Keshen became gradually the leading minds: the one as president of one of the boards, and, after some years, as premier; the other as governor-general of Chih-li province, and subsequently assistant-minister.

Amongst the personages who were raised to high honours was the ancient Yuen-Yuen; who, in his eighteenth year, had attained to high literary rank, and was likewise employed as tutor by the principal descendant of Confut-sze, who bears the title of Sacred Duke. He then contracted a great intimacy with the daughter, who was very talented, and married her, and finally obtained the highest degree of preferment in the Han-lin college. His connection procured him influence; and he was raised to the governorship of Kwang-tung

and Kwang-se. When in this position, he ordered a very valuable work on astronomy to be written by a Chinese priest, with the assistance of Europeans. He was, however, too learned to be a practical man, and did many things contrary to common sense. This, however, did not prevent him becoming governor of Yunnan and Kweichoo subsequently; when he gave great satisfaction: especially at the time of the earthquake, by which a great part of some of the richest districts was ruined. Though now already far advanced in years, he was called to be member of the Cabinet, and continued for a considerable time to hold his office.

Lung's career was now run; he retired from service when a general, and was a most extraordinary instance of the versatility of genius and the changes of fortune. Old Chang-ling, celebrated in the Turkistan wars, and highly spoken of for his administrative talents, was likewise forced, by the infirmities of age, to leave his office. The Chinese assistant-minister went out also; and thus, by a natural course of events, the road of promotion for the personal friends of Taou-kwang, became open.

We must not imagine, however, that the Nuy-kô, or Cabinet, is an institution similar to that in Europe. The highest dignitaries of the State belong to it, whose business it is to go through a series of forms, and uphold the routine of government; but as they are mostly decrepit men, who have lived already too long, a number of promising youths, mostly belonging to influential families, are attached to the establishment, and do all the work.

The power of administration, however, does not reside here, but in the privy council; an assembly called together at the option of the Emperor, without any reference to the station and rank of the adviser. A minister is, therefore, only so far powerful as the sovereign is pleased to ask him for his opinion; otherwise, he has only to follow the general routine, which leaves him quite powerless. The despotism of China centres in one individual, and leaves nothing even in name to others; unless the possessor of all power deigns to impart some influence to the individual. A change in the Cabinet, therefore, implies seldom a change of measures — always a change of favourites.

CHAPTER VII.

Taou-kwang's desire for popularity.—Distress in 1832.—Taou-kwang rewards the charity of the nobles.—Laws respecting convicts.—Trait of character in the Emperor.—Idolatry of the Chinese.—An idol raised in dignity.—Situation of Canton.—Affected contempt for trade of the Chinese.—Restrictions upon trade.—Alleged causes of the war with England.—Government proclamation.—Insults of the Governor of Canton to the picture of the British sovereign.—His defence.—Cessation of monopoly.—Arrival of Lord Napier.—Conduct of Chinese Government on the occasion.—Advance of two British frigates.—Anger of the Emperor, and disgrace of the governor.—Death of Lord Napier.—Opposition of Taou-kwang to friendly intercourse with the "barbarians."—Deficiency in the exchequer.—Sale of offices.—Amount of revenue.—Proposed methods of supplying the deficit.—Taou-kwang's sensitiveness in money matters.—Effect upon government of the sale of offices.

TAOU-KWANG laboured much to be popular in his capital. In so large a city, with a teeming population, frequently during cold winters in want of the necessaries of life; it is requisite to take measures to prevent a general

rising in case of dearth, for there are instances on record when the starving clamorous rabble pressed to the gates of the palace, and would not be refused relief.

In the winter of 1832, their sufferings were very great; and it was then rendered obligatory on the Government to provide for the wants of the poor. During ten days, more than 400,000 mouths were fed. This number proves the large pauper population inhabiting Pekin. Several rich men had subscribed largely to procure rice, and the Emperor, hearing of it, conferred peacocks' feathers on some; on others, the rank of Kin-jin or Doctor of Laws.

A censor, hearing of this, praised this signal act of favour, but deprecated it as a precedent; for, said he, if rich men can obtain degrees for money, farewell to the prospects of the poor scholar: talent and learning will go out, and wealth and stupidity come in to the service of Government. The Emperor took this reproof silently.

He was, at the same time, very ill pleased with a suggestion of the board of punishment, for altering the law which involves in the punishment of a rebel, all his kindred likewise.

Taou-kwang replied, "Rebels are as virulent poison, which infects a whole region; and inasmuch as they involve officers, soldiers, and their families, their crime is of the deepest dye: their wickedness of the worst description. If, then, their kindred are not all extirpated, it is an act of clemency. The court wished that the convicts banished for political crimes should not be allowed to marry on arriving at the place of their exile. The Emperor replied, this will never prevent the increase of the brood. In the existing law, however, there is an inequality of punishment: at present, the kindred of rebels, when arrived at years of maturity, are banished to new settlements, and given to the soldiery for slaves; and those under age, are emasculated: which is treating them with more severity than other criminals.

We quote these sentences to shew how severe the Emperor was in theory, how mild in practice. Unlike his forefathers, he forgave the insurgents, punishing only the leaders for their crime; and thereby conciliated many an inveterate enemy.

China, with all its wisdom, does not know

God; and, though philosophizing upon many subjects, the whole nation, with the great Emperor at its head, is given to the most absurd idolatry. As an instance, we may here mention a request of the Governor-general of Kwang-tung and Kwang-se, and of the Lieutenant of the latter province, to Taou-kwang, to confer honours upon an idol, the image of a man who lived during the Sung dynasty.

This image was believed to have shewn wonderful power during the rebellion of the mountaineers; as, when they passed the villages where its shrines stood, they did not enter to burn them. On another occasion, a number of prisoners, bound in one of its temples, tried to loosen their bonds during the night, when suddenly a flame rose from the roof, which alarmed the Chinese soldiers, who began instantly to fire upon the fugitives; and the idol remained unhurt, though the prisoners were all killed. For this intervention, the great Emperor, at the suggestion of his officers, vouchsafed to the idol that it should be raised several degrees, to shew the veneration and esteem for the services rendered to the dynasty.

We must now turn our attention to Canton, and give a brief detail of matters there since the accession of Taou-kwang; as they most materially affected the whole Empire subsequently. The coast of China is very much indented, and possesses many harbours; and the commercial spirit of the nation has opened many emporiums of trade. None, however, is so conspicuous as Canton, a very large city, more populous than Calcutta, and situated on the Chookeang (or pearl river), which is navigable even for large vessels up to within a few miles from the city. The situation pointed it out as a great outlet for commerce, and it has been for centuries the focus of foreign trade; having become more and more so since the Manchoo conquest.

The Chinese do not really despise trade, but they affect to do so; the Government does so likewise, and is always accustomed to speak of the whole commerce of the Empire as something very trifling, and of the revenues as not a feather's weight in importance.

It was merely the compassion of the great Emperor that allowed barbarians to trade; and hence the laws and regulations respecting them

are very strict: if any one did not choose to submit to them, he might leave the country. A system of petty annoyance had, therefore, been established, circumscribing the liberty of foreign merchants, and imposing many galling burthens upon commerce. If anybody had to complain, it was to be done through the Hong merchants; who might, as it suited their interest, prefer the complaint, or bury it in oblivion. When one now considers the spirit which animates the natives of the west, one can easily conceive that collisions must have been frequent, and that the necessity of a change was apparent to all. This, however, the Chinese Government obstinately denied; and Taou-kwang, notwithstanding the increase of commerce, strenuously resisted all reforms. His own interests were, however, somewhat at stake; for the duties arising from foreign commerce are directly paid into the imperial exchequer, and a superintendent of customs, who is independent of the governor, is for this purpose sent from the capital.

Complaints of the extortions of the mandarins and the bankruptcy of the Hong merchants had been very frequent, and upon

several occasions it appeared that matters were coming to a crisis. Both parties, however, being much interested in the preservation of the commerce, found it necessary to temporize for their common interest; the matter of dispute was, therefore, again forgotten, until another cause of dissatisfaction broke out. To understand better the causes of the war with England, it is well to describe in a few words the course of events.

In 1828, a large firm of the Hong merchants—the class which had the exclusive trade with foreigners—had failed. The Government guarantees the solvency of these merchants, and by its permission an extra duty was levied upon the trade, to constitute a fund for liquidating the debts of any bankrupt. The creditors therefore applied to the governor, and received for answer:—"The laws of the Celestial Empire are rigidly severe, and never shew any partiality. To dun me with petitions and to prove that no justice is done, shews that the barbarians' madness, rebellion, and audacity have reached their utmost limits. By right, they should be immediately seized and punished; but in clemency I first issue this reprimand

publicly. I will decidedly not shew the least indulgence. Tremble at this!"

Various other grievances occurred the following year, and there was an entire stop put to the trade; in consequence a remonstrance was sent to the city gate. The Government replied:—"The proclamations" (containing very vile accusations) "are really to shew kindness to the foreigners, and to soothe and tranquillize them; but they, ignorant how to be excited to gratitude, turn round, and because of the proclamations disallowing them to bring barbarian women to Canton, and to sit in sedan chairs, present whining petitions. Do not scheme for selfish convenience, and obstinately adhere to your former talk. Thus with a quiet mind, keeping in your station, you may enjoy the favour of a benevolent ruler. The chief" (of the foreigners) "exhibited every sort of contemptuous behaviour. Death is not sufficient to expiate his crime." In his report to the Emperor, the governor says:—"If any should again presume to oppose, it will be our duty, in obedience to your Majesty's will, to form some plea for driving them out, and inflicting severe punishment and correc-

tion, without in the slightest degree bending or making accommodations with them; in order to make the dignity of the Empire revered, and to keep in awe the stupid obstinacy of the barbarians."

From the tenor of this language, one would have supposed that the whole trade was on the eve of ceasing altogether. Nothing, however, was farther from the reality: it was increasing in spite of all obstacles; until new differences arose, two years later. These induced the Governor-General of India to write a letter to the Canton authorities, which scarcely elicited an answer.

There was at that time a Lieutenant-governor at Canton, a very determined enemy of foreigners, and an orthodox Chinese in the fullest sense of the word, who set all their claims at open defiance, treated with insolent contempt the picture of the British sovereign, which stood in the great hall, and added other indignities. On a remonstrance being sent in, the perpetrator of the outrage said, "When young I read poetry and books, and my natural disposition is, to issue orders with attentive respect. Even on a child, I

would not trample, if it had not violated the law. How could I enter this people's factory, and insult their king's picture? As to worshipping the picture of princes, there is originally no impropriety in it; but it is befitting that a curtain screen and an altar with incense be set up, that the intended devotion may be manifested."

In 1834 the monopoly of the East India Company ceased, and the British became a free trade. This was a new epoch, different from all preceding ones; and the arrival of Lord Napier, as chief superintendent of trade, caused immense sensation. We shall quote here some of the sentiments expressed on this occasion, to shew that the Chinese Government had a deep-rooted aversion to coming to a proper understanding with foreign powers.

A letter sent by Lord Napier to the Canton Government was refused, and the Governor animadverted upon this act, saying:—"The barbarians are permitted to visit Macao only; and when they have business of buying and selling, are allowed to request a permit to come to the provincial city. The barbarian eye must not be allowed to loiter about."

As the British representative would not leave

Canton, the trade was stopped by the Hong merchants; one of whom was imprisoned, because the boat in which Lord Napier had come belonged to a ship which the merchant had supplied. Much irritation was occasioned by Lord Napier remaining at his post, and not retiring to Macao; and the edicts against him became more furious than ever. The Governor wrote to the Emperor:—"The disposition of the English barbarians is ferocious; they trust in the strength of their ships and the effectiveness of their guns; but the inner seas having but shallow water, with many banks and rocks, the said barbarian ships, though they should discharge their guns, cannot do it with full effect. The barbarian eye having placed himself in the central flowery land, we are in the state relatively of host and guest. If he should madly think to overleap the bounds, our troops may composedly wait to do their work; and he will be found powerless."

When the restrictions became more galling, two small British frigates, lying outside, were ordered to move up the river to the anchorage of the ships. This was not done without their being fired at by the forts, and the

Chinese stockading the river, to prevent their boats from reaching Canton. When it was reported to Taou-kwang that the Bogue forts had been passed, he wrote:—"It seems that all the forts are erected in vain; they cannot beat back two barbarian ships! it is ridiculous, detestable! The military preparations being reduced to such a state as this, it is not surprising that the outside barbarians regard them slightly?" The Governor, who was also a member of the cabinet, was degraded, and died subsequently of grief.

Lord Napier, however, was so much harassed, that he was seized with a dangerous disease, from the effects of which he died, much regretted.

Here the quarrel ended: it was, however, resumed six years later, under a very different aspect, though the foundation of it had long ago been laid. Meantime Taou-kwang shewed the utmost aversion to any approach to friendly intercourse with the English; and denounced the man who dared to suggest such a thing: keep barbarians at a distance, was the maxim of his Government.

Notwithstanding the utmost parsimony, the

Chinese revenue had fallen short of the expenditure The outlay had exceeded the income more than thirty millions of taels in 1833 ; owing to the various wars, rebellions, public works, drought, inundations, and other contingencies, which made extraordinary expenditure necessary. To make up the deficit, Taoukwang had recourse to the sale of offices: to which we before alluded.

One of the censors, passing his remarks upon the financial state of the country, says:—"The whole income from land-tax, salt monopoly, customs and duties, as well as other items, does not exceed forty million ounces of silver! This is nearly the net amount of silver sent to the capital from the provinces, for the use of the general Government; the provincial treasure and income, the Imperial exchequer, and the tribute in kind, which is very considerable, being quite separate from the above, and not included. The national expenditure is thirty and odd million ounces. Of late years not one has elapsed in which most numerous defalcations in every department has not occurred; and the income has not been sufficient even in times of peace; whilst in times

of insurrection, scarcity, &c., the deficit has amounted to millions. To supply this, some advised to open the mines, some to raise the price of salt, some to sell appointments, and induce merchants to subscribe for the necessity of the State; thus causing great anxiety to the sacred mind of the sovereign."

This was indeed the case; and if Taou-kwang was sensitive on any point, it was in money matters. A hundred plans were proposed and rejected, and the result of all was, that the sale of offices should furnish the means. From henceforth there commenced a traffic in prospective emoluments and honours: everything was for sale; and the very foundations of Government were thereby sapped.

CHAPTER VIII.

Celebration of the sixtieth birthday of the Empress-dowager, and of the marriage of the new Empress.—Principles of Chinese military policy.—Burlesque appearance of the soldiers.—Neutralization of the military power.—Rise of officers.—Taou-kwang's sense of the defects in military policy.—His wise exhortations.—State of the Navy.—Superiority of the pirate's vessels.—Taou-kwang's indignation at the incapacity of the Navy.—Disgrace of officers.—Inefficiency of Imperial edicts.—Taou-kwang bewails the degenerate times.—His satisfaction with his Ministers.—Chinese veneration for age.—Account of Sung.—His character.—Power of his name.—His degradation.—Sentence of the Emperor upon him.—He regains favour.—He turns author.—His appointment under Taou-kwang.—His final retirement in 1833.

ONE of the most joyous days at Court was the celebration of the sixtieth birthday of the Empress-dowager. This old lady had exercised considerable influence over her adopted son, on several occasions; and he dared not to undertake anything of importance, before he had received her sanction. It was she, herself, who pointed out the necessity of conferring honourable titles on three concubines;

who took rank accordingly in the harem; and she also sanctioned the union of Taou-kwang with the celebrated empress. It is, therefore, no wonder that great rejoicings took place on this occasion; for, according to Chinese chronology, she had, on that day, completed a whole cycle. Parsimony was forgotten; new examinations were granted, as a great favour, to accelerate promotion; and other great boons were conferred. The nuptials of the new empress were celebrated at the same time, and the lugubrious appearance of the court vanished.

The Chinese navy and army now came in contact with western foreigners; and experience proved that they were utterly useless when their services were required. According to the never-varying principle of Chinese polity, the army ought to be just sufficient to protect the State and the people from violence and insurrection; and the greatest calamity which can befall the country is military rule; when the sword is substituted for the pencil, and military glory becomes the object of ambition for noble minds. Though the Manchoo power was founded on conquest, and though warriors became the masters of the land, it was considered most

conducive to the retention of the conquest to make the civil power supreme, entrust the chief command of the provincial troops to the civil governors, and make all military officers, with the exception of the free Manchoos, subservient to them. The army was reduced to the very minimum, in time of peace — about 1,700,000 men—and changed into a kind of police: the officers received small pay, and were obliged to enrich themselves by allowing the men to go on furlough and drawing their rations.

Whilst, therefore, always keeping a very correct muster-roll, the actual number of the soldiers was far short of the names. They were, moreover, badly clothed and fed, and miserably accoutred; so that when called out for service they presented a very burlesque appearance, and forced a smile of pity from the beholders. Did war require any addition to the army, it was always deemed necessary to call out a strong body of militia for the time being, under the command of high civilians, to neutralize the military power entrusted to a single general. The officers rose, like the civilians, by examination—not in literary lore, but in

the art of shooting with the bow; and whosoever was most expert in that branch was promoted. Many officers rose from the ranks, and were very ignorant men.

Taou-kwang perceived the evil, and regretted the forlorn state of the country in case of a general war; he administered many wise exhortations, and suggested very excellent means for improvement, but never put his hand to the removal of difficulties; which were indeed formidable. In one of his rescripts he says:—"Hereafter let all the governors and lieutenant-governors act with real zeal for the discipline in the army, and for the maintenance of correct principles. Let the officers entrusted with the reviews, lay aside all undue regard for others, and distinguish with a perfect regard to justice, the several merits and demerits of those submitted to their inspection; even as if we were ourselves present to review them."

He had heard that military officers were wont to go in sedan chairs, and denounced this as a most effeminate custom: one of the military functionaries went out hunting once in a sedan chair, when on a tour of official investigation. These and other matters caused

Taou-kwang to exclaim: "A thousand parts of the machinery daily demand our care, and if our thoughts wander from them in the least degree, excess or deficit, in one quarter or the other, is inevitable. Have all my servants, the recipients of many favours, never heard the rule which a thousand ages have ratified? that they owe their merits to their prince, their faults they themselves must correct? Henceforth, then, let them make it their anxious endeavour to shake off sloth and indolence, and forsake every bad habit." Here the matter rested, and no real improvements were ever introduced; which would, however, have been impracticable without the aid of foreign officers.

The state of the navy was still worse. The vessels were scarcely as good as a common trading junk, and were stationed in a certain circuit, beyond which they never went; so that the naval officers were ignorant of their own coast. In heavy weather these junks were not sea-worthy; many foundered every year; and it was very difficult, if not impossible, to beat up against a stiff gale. Several of them, unable to fetch the land during a storm, drifted to Siam or Cochin-China. As the

pirates had fitted out superior vessels, better manned and armed, they could boldly encounter the mandarins; and Government was finally obliged to obtain models of piratical craft, and fit the vessels of the navy out in the same manner, in order to ensure their efficiency.

Taou-kwang heard with indignation that barbarian vessels were constantly cruising on the coast, without being driven away by his navy; the vessels of which, he supposed, were stationed like chessmen all along the inner seas. He upbraided an admiral for having chased a ship to the south, which subsequently appeared in the north; and many of the officers were deprived of their rank. These, in their turn, asserted that the foreign ships sailed with the swiftness of a shuttlecock, and that it was impossible to intercept them. The edicts were numerous, and every one stronger than the other; but the navy remained what it had been before—a useless appendage, to increase the expenditure of the State.

These and many other subjects furnished topics of invective, in which Taou-kwang frequently lost his temper. He bewailed the

degenerate times, and spoke of the frequent calamities, the corruption and venality of his officers, and the bad state of the administration. For many of these censures there was sufficient ground; but the energetic measures of the empress removed many stumbling-blocks.

On passing in review the services of his ministers, before the re-modelling of the cabinet already alluded to, Taou-kwang expressed himself very favourably about it. One of the cabinet, the premier, having served during three different reigns, and been premier in 1817, Taou-kwang left him in his office, as the automaton dignitary: such a personage always being desirable as director. With one short intermission he had maintained himself constantly in his place, for he interfered with none. One of his colleagues, although eighty-six years of age, was still hale and strong, but he died soon afterwards; a third minister departed at the age of eighty-seven, full of honours. These, however, were ordinary men, and as it is customary in China to honour age, the very presence of such functionaries inspired veneration.

Sung's turn, as we already observed, had

arrived, and he was laid upon the shelf for ever. We have so frequently referred to this extraordinary man, that it may not be out of place to give here a short account of his rise to power. He was first brought to European notice by Lord Macartney, who thus speaks of him:—"He possesses an elevated mind, and during the whole time of our connection with him, he on all occasions conducted himself towards us in the most friendly manner." He was, even at that early age, a courtier, whose great tact and uncommon energy rendered him worthy of such notice. He held several offices, both military and civil, under Kéen-lung, after having passed an examination much to his credit. He rose by degrees, and in every situation gained the esteem of the people under his rule; which extended to the far-distant Turkistan and Canton. In the former place he had some of the native princes pleading for him; in the latter he had been appointed Governor-General, to pacify the barbarians after Admiral Drury's expedition; in which he perfectly succeeded. His name was such a talisman, that some censors suggested that it would be best to send him to the disturbed

districts to render assistance, as it was quite certain that his very presence would bring alleviation. Although he could not avoid falling occasionally into disgrace, he maintained the rank of prime minister until 1817. He was degraded from that high rank for having cast some blame upon his master. The latter adds to the sentence:—"Let his name be retained in the books, and if for eight years he commit no error, let him be eligible for his former situation." His friends, and amongst others the astronomical board, attributed to his degradation a fearful hurricane, which occurred during his disgrace. Sung, however, did not despair; he was made military governor of Manchooria; and when Kea-king visited the tombs of his ancestors, he regained his favour; and as he was then ailing, he received from his imperial master ten ounces of ginseng, as a panacea against all ills. In 1819, however, the emperor pronounced him to be inadequate to the duties of minister in the imperial presence, because, being seventy years of age, he rode very badly; he was therefore sent to his old station with the same title. On Taou-kwang's

accession he was first degraded—because he was thought to be implicated in the loss of the seal of the war department; then made governor of Gehol, the imperial summer residence, and afterwards president of the Censorate. He now turned author, and wrote a book respecting the newly-acquired possessions in Turkistan, where he had spent many of his days. In 1824 he became again president of the Censorate, when he was directed to attend to the routine of office, instead of wildly confusing and puzzling himself with extraneous matters. He went as a commissioner in 1826 to Shanse; the next year, however, he was again in Peking, and sat near the emperor at one of the new year parties. Afterwards he became the tutor of the heir-apparent, and was made a member of the sacrificial court; and, finally, again sent back to Gehol.

He subsequently wrote to the emperor, requesting that his whole income of 700 ounces per annum should go towards liquidating a long standing debt of 40,000 ounces. Since he incurred this debt he had been military governor of Elee, a post of some importance, as in its jurisdiction the newly-conquered territories are

comprised; governor-general of Keangnan and Keangse—the highest provincial appointment—and governor-general of Kwang-tung and Kwangsi; and yet, during all this time, he could not save sufficient to pay it off. Taou-kwang, in reply to his request, said:—"I am aware of Sung's pure official character, and therefore remit the claim."

He was subsequently nominated governor of Peking, and president of the military board, and suddenly ordered to proceed to the distant Kopto, on a tour of inquiry. This disagreeable commission was finished a year afterwards, and he was then nominated president of the colonial board, and lord of the three treasuriës, or of the private purse of his imperial master; but he shortly retired from office on the plea of ill health.

A month afterwards he again solicited employment, and then Taou-kwang remarks:—"Sung informed us lately that, in consequence of his great age, his back and feet were weak—his eyes could no longer fulfil their functions—his hand trembled when he signed documents—and his memory was perceptibly weakened. He therefore requested to retire, to seek

repose, which was granted. He now asks again for employment, and he has been appointed general of the blue Manchoo standard. His constant application arises from his accustomed boldness in plaguing us with remonstrances. Although Sung has acted with caprice, we leave him to the rebuke of his own conscience."

Sung was, however, disgraced in the beginning of 1832, and degraded to the third degree of rank. But in August of the same year he was again restored, to commence a political struggle with Hegan, the brother-in-law of the Emperor. Hegan wished to usurp all power, and his relation in the harem had even dared to take away Sung's daughter, who had for many years upheld the falling fortunes of her father. From this disgrace he never recovered, and he retired finally in 1833. Sketches like these give us some insight into Taou-kwang's government, which shared with all other Asiatic despotisms the rule by intrigue, and the insecurity of power.

CHAPTER IX.

Uniformity of Taou-kwang's life.—His adulation of his adopted mother.—Remonstrance against the expenses of the court.—Lin-tsi-tsen's petition against the land tax. — Retrograde movement proposed; and punishment of the author of the proposition.—Severity of Taou-kwang. — His pilgrimages to the tombs of his ancestors.—His quiet life.—Report of ministerial progress.—Investigation into literary merit.—Tranquillity vanishes with the influence of the Empress.—Evils resulting from the use of opium.—Measures against its use.—Charge against the Emperor's uncle.—Interruptions to commerce.—Lin's proceedings against opium-smokers in Canton. — Punishments of dealers and smokers.—Success of the measures.—Lin's advancement.

TAOU-KWANG'S mode of life became, with the increase of his years, more and more uniform. He used, after breakfast, to attend to his duties in the council, and then take a stroll to pay a visit at the window of his adopted mother. He was often at a loss how to honour her; and presented himself before her,

whilst surrounded by his courtiers, as her dutiful son. In one of the congratulatory addresses on her birthday, on speaking about her, he says,—"Our exalted race has become most illustrious under the protection of that honoured relation, to whom the whole court looks up. To her happiness, already unalloyed, the highest degree of felicity has been superadded, causing joy and gladness to every inmate of the palace. Her majesty, the great Empress, benign and dignified, universally beneficent, perfectly serene, extensively benevolent, composed and discreet, thoroughly virtuous, placid, and self-collected, in favours unbounded, who in virtue is the equal of the exalted and expansive heavens, and in goodness of the vast and solid earth: she has within her perfumed palace aided the renovating endeavours, rendering the seasons ever harmonious, and in her maternal court has afforded a bright rule of government thoroughly disinterested."

Such was the bombastic adulation offered up to this old woman; and altars were erected in all provinces to worship her as a goddess. One wonders how so intelligent a nation as the Chinese can go so far in its absurdities.

But they grope in darkness, and have not the light from above.

Parsimonious habits increased on Taou-kwang with his age; yet he was nevertheless blamed for the profusion of his expenditure, by a censor who expostulated with his master regarding the traffic in offices. This practice had brought much misery upon the land, and caused trouble in all the departments, because greedy extortioners bought high offices; there were even instances of a robber-chief and a priest—a person of very low degree in China—having attained to great honours by paying for the same. The censor goes on to recommend saving, and is very much dissatisfied with the profuse expenditure of the court establishment; saying, "that if the expenses of imperial establishments were once removed, it would save as much in a year as the sales of offices have produced in ten years; for the expense of the flour and rouge at the Tung-tsaou harem, is annually 100,000 taels; the salaries of eunuchs are 120,000 taels; the gardens of Yuen-ming-yuen cost more than 200,000; the establishment at Gehol, 480,000; the superintending officers enjoy salaries of

160,000 taels; and the women of these gardens receive in presents 250,000 taels. If these few items of expense were abolished, there would be a saving of more than a million taels of useless expenditure, talent might be brought forward in the service of the country, and the people's wealth be secure."

Remonstrances like these were placidly received, because Taou-kwang could never blame himself for extravagance. He laboured very hard to keep the finances in order, but found it a hopeless task: in the tenth year of his reign he had to remit the whole arrears of taxes, amounting to more than twenty millions of silver; which, to his parsimonious mind, was a very great trial.

Subsequently, however, matters again went wrong. We quote here the remonstrances of the famous Lin-tsi-tsen, who was subsequently commissioner at Canton, and at that time lieutenant-governor of Keangsoo province. He pleaded for the exemption of that province from paying the customary taxes on land. He says, he received a letter from the imperial council, and a few words written with the vermilion pencil, in the Emperor's own

hand, threatening the local government for not collecting the revenue. When he read this, kneeling on the ground, he was struck dumb with fright and vexation; yet after a while he resumed his pencil, and, with tears in his eyes, wrote as follows:—"All that the government possesses comes from the people, and attention to them is the first duty of a statesman. In the third year of Taou-kwang, the province subscribed 1,950,000 ounces of silver, in the eleventh, 1,400,000; yet non-payment of taxes has become the rule instead of the exception." To this moving address the Emperor was pleased to listen. The payment of taxes was delayed, and Lin-tsi-tsen praised as a worthy statesman, true and faithful to his duty, and subsequently promoted.

All, however, fared not so well. There was a great learned man, who being heartily disgusted with the immorality of his contemporaries, and the whole state of things around him, wrote a memorial to the Emperor, in which he urged, that the people ought to revert to the happy state of antiquity, when the land was cultivated by the united efforts of the government and people, and

starvation unknown: as the ancients lived, so he wished the present race to live.

The Emperor decided that, for his presumption in tendering advice unasked, he should receive 100 blows with a large bamboo, and be transported for three years. The memorialist, however, was the only son of an old mother; and the law directs, that in such a case the necessary support be not withdrawn from the decrepit parent. The culprit was, therefore, first to be bambooed, then made to stand on the pillory, and, finally, allowed to go home.

Taou-kwang, in his latter days, was very often severe, and on one occasion lectured the governors and lieutenant-governors for their remissness in seeing that the judges performed their duty. He said, they must not allow themselves to be deluded by the phrase, "You may save the living, but cannot save the dead," and such like prating, which is only used to recommend a lax and mitigated punishment. Judges ought neither to prevent the action of the law, nor to connive at crime, but should aid in maintaining impartiality in the administration of justice. When an offender,

who had committed justifiable homicide, was recommended to mercy, nothing could be obtained but the commutation of his sentence from being cut in pieces to decapitation. Wishing to be impartial, we mention such cases as these, which are little in accordance with the whole tenor of Taou-kwang's life.

The Emperor went twice, subsequently, on a pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors, so soon as he perceived that the tranquillity of Shanse was restored. All the intervening time he lived as much *incognito* as possible, and we have scarcely any account of his progress. A quiet life became more and more attractive to him, and two years passed without any memorable event; the old ministers of the cabinet dropping off one after the other.

It is customary for the sovereign to express his opinion freely once a year, and this is published to the whole land. We give here an example in the one of 1838. "The cabinet minister, Changling, has strenuously exerted himself during a long lapse of years; he has reached his eightieth year, yet his energies are still in full force. His colleagues have invariably displayed diligence and attention,

and have not failed in rendering us assistance. The president of the Board of Offices has knowledge and attainments of a respectable and sterling character, and has shewn himself public-spirited and intelligent in the performance of special duties assigned to him. The president of the Board of Punishments retains his usual strength and energies, and in the performance of his judicial duties has displayed perspicacity and circumspection. Keshen, the assistant-minister and governor of Chihle, transacts the affairs of his government with faithfulness, and the military force under his control is well disciplined. The governor of Shense and Kansuh is cautious and prudent, and performs the duties with careful exactness," &c.

But his opinion of others is not so favourable; for Taou-kwang says of one subordinate member of the cabinet:—"He is hasty, and deficient both in decision and capacity; he is incapable of moving and acting for himself; let him take an inferior station, and receive an appointment in the second class of the guards. The governor of Hoo-kwang, though having under him the whole civil and

military forces of two provinces, has yet been unable these many days to seize a few seditious, beggarly vagabonds; let him, therefore, be degraded," &c. Censures like these are so common, that, in order to prevent them, the high officers are in the habit of accusing themselves. In such cases, the monarch forgives, or inflicts the very punishment which the grandee himself dictated. All this is done in China according to routine.

Taou-kwang was required to assist at the examinations for the highest degrees, which are held in the palace; the Emperor, who is in everything the greatest personage, being also considered the best judge of literary talent. When all the doctors, who are to undergo the examination of his Majesty, are assembled, he himself gives out the themes from the Classics. We quote some of them:—"Be always sincere in speech, and determinate in action.—All things are nourished together, without injuring each other.—The laws of nature move on in unison, without collision." This has reference to the recommendation, that the government of a state ought to be a transcript of the course of nature. "Reciting their

poetry, and reading their books, can one remain ignorant of the ancients?" Such were the favourite topics of the monarch's own choosing, which he proposed to the disquisition of his learned assembly. He who wrote best upon these subjects was entitled to promotion to higher literary degrees.

The last four years had passed very placidly; a noble woman held the reins of the government, watched over all movements, and took care of her husband; statesmen of renown, who rose in importance through her interest, were at the head of affairs; everything seemed to thrive; and if difficulties arose, they were very soon removed. The beneficent hand that guided the helm was everywhere felt, though not acknowledged; but from the moment that this excellent lady lost her influence, through a rival, matters grew worse and worse, and national calamity upon national calamity followed.

We must here remark, that the great bane of China was the introduction of the use of opium by foreigners. Its consumption increased, in the course of a century, from two hundred to twenty thousand chests, and it be-

came greater every year. Both the morals of the people, and the circulation of the precious metals, were thereby most materially affected, and many edicts had been issued to prohibit the importation of the drug, and put a stop to the vice of opium-smoking. As, however, so much has been written upon the subject in detail, it will here be necessary to refer to it only so far as the life of Taou-kwang is concerned.

Opium had made great ravages in the harem, amongst a dissolute set of women and eunuchs; and rumour says, that Taou-kwang himself partook of the poison; if so, he soon roused himself from its lethargic and dangerous effects, and resolved to proceed with great severity against the opium-smokers.

Before this resolution was taken, however, some wise men suggested, that it would be better to legalize the use of the drug. The project was submitted to all the high authorities throughout the Empire, and negatived by an overwhelming majority; those few in favour of it were dismissed from office, and Taou-kwang himself took the lead in adopting measures against its use. Those princes of

the blood accused of this vice were disgraced, and others under imputation of indulging in it sent away from court.

A very serious accusation was, at the same time, brought against an uncle of the Emperor's: it was said that he kept a number of people confined at his house, in order to extort money from them. How such things can happen in the neighbourhood of the palace, without being instantly discovered, is a riddle.

Throughout the empire, stringent measures were enforced against the use of opium; and as the custom of smoking it had become general amongst mandarins, soldiers, sailors, and merchants, in the maritime provinces, and many were guilty of having traded in the poisonous drug, the prisons filled very rapidly. The informers were numerous and unscrupulous: whoever had a grudge against his neighbour, denounced him as a transgressor of the laws respecting this drug; thousands of innocent persons were thus brought under the ban of the law; and all commerce was nearly at a stand-still, because villains, pretending to search for opium, robbed the traders and committed very great outrages.

The principal place where the poison abounded in China, was Canton; and to strike the decisive blow there, was the firm resolution of Taou-kwang. He chose, as the instrument to effect his purpose, that very Lin-tsi-tsen, who had remonstrated with him so very earnestly in behalf of the people in Keangsoo; and who, when subsequently raised to be governor-general of Hoo-kwang, had proceeded with the most relentless cruelty against opium-smokers. As he was a sincere, resolute man, unscrupulous as to the means of gaining his ends, and ready to undertake the difficult task, he received from the hands of Taou-kwang himself, plenipotentiary powers to carry out the Imperial behest of extirpating the opium traffic root and branch.

With these he arrived at Canton, and being confident that foreigners could be treated in the same manner as Chinese, he endeavoured to effect his ends by force; putting the guilty and innocent alike under restrictions, and fulminating dire threats of vengeance if the whole of the opium in the ships along the coast were not given up.

The British representative then stepped be-

tween, and gave up the whole of the opium belonging to British merchants, in the name of his government, in order to save the lives of the merchants; and the immense quantity thus obtained was nominally destroyed. Lin flattered himself that he had for ever annihilated the evil; and by way of security for the future, he exacted a bond from every vessel entering the port of Canton, in which the captain pledged himself to undergo capital punishment with his crew, and to have his whole ship and cargo confiscated, if any opium were found in his possession on board.

The proceedings of the authorities against the opium dealers at Canton were most rigorous: they were severely punished, and the prisons were filled with wretches falsely denounced as opium-smokers. To suppress the vice, government decreed, at the suggestion of Lin, that dealers in the drug should henceforth be decapitated, and smokers strangled. To wean the latter from this vile habit, six months were to be given them to live in seclusion; when, if they became entirely free from the propensity, they were to be respited; otherwise, they were to be executed.

The effect of these measures was magical. The people at once felt an abhorrence for the vice; the government officers endeavoured to find out every scrap of opium and burn it. Terror pervaded the whole land; all business had ceased, and every one trembled, fearing to be dragged to the tribunal and made to suffer for having indulged in the vice.

This lasted a few months. Lin triumphed, and suggested that the tithing system should be introduced, and every ten families become mutually responsible for the abstinence of their members from opium-smoking. Thus matters proceeded according to the wish of the commissioner: and who would not have rejoiced at seeing the whole nation abandoning such a vice? Yet the period of abstinence was short, and in a few months matters grew much worse than they had ever been before.

Elated with his extraordinary success, Lin forwarded such accounts to his sovereign as gained the favour of Taou-kwang, and procured from him the high appointment of governor-general of Keangnan and Keanse. He received a peacock's feather as a reward,

and now anticipated that he would be able to effect everything he desired.

When, however, the trade of Canton was impeded by his measures, the Emperor thought fit to direct him to remain governor of that province, so long as affairs were in a doubtful state. His predecessor in that situation had largely profited by the traffic, as nearly every mandarin in authority had done, and a stigma was, therefore, attached to the office. He governed for a short time, and was subsequently sent into exile.

CHAPTER X.

Lin's literary achievement.—He proposes improvements in the navy.—Trade with England prohibited.—Chinese notions of English courage.—Impatience for war with the British. — Foreign policy. — Preparations for war. — Proposals of peace. — Sentence against deserters.—Unlooked-for appearance of the English fleet at the mouth of the Pei-ho.—Judicious deportment of Keshen.—Ravages of the mob.—Taou-kwang's apprehensions.—Arrival of the British fleet in the Canton waters.—Indignation of the Chinese thereat.—Skilful behaviour of Keshen.—His subsequent disgrace.—Disgrace of Elepoo.—Yukeen's barbarous treatment of the English.—Defeat of the Chinese.—False report of conquest.—Honours paid to the Goddess of Mercy.—Victories of the English.—Suicide of Yukeen.—Execution of Yupooquen.

HITHERTO, not one of the Chinese grandees had ever troubled his head about foreign countries; Lin was the first who evinced an interest in them. He employed a number of translators to furnish him with information, which was afterwards compiled into a book, and is

perhaps the most extraordinary medley of falsehood, fiction, and history, ever printed.

It was this grandee who declared, that China ought to assume its high station amongst the nations of Asia, and have a navy befitting its power, constructed upon the most approved principles of western nations, and maintained by the duties arising from foreign trade. None but he himself dared to say such things, and his words were recorded but disregarded: Taou-kwang was determined not to advance an inch in the proposed improvements, for fear of subverting the whole system, and undermining the very foundations of his government.

The subsequent measures of Lin shew the ruthless character of the man. He ordered the burning of a Spanish brig, which he knew had never been engaged in opium smuggling, because he wished to exhibit to all the ships engaged in this illicit practice an example of the fate that awaited them. A party sent by him attacked a boat, which had left Macao at his express command, and murdered several people on board. When all his endeavours had failed in inducing the English merchant ships to enter the river, he procured

from the Emperor an order prohibiting the trade with England for ever.

The mayor of Peking, a native of Hiang-shan, near Macao, at the same time requested his master to confine the whole foreign trade to that settlement, and make such arrangements that whenever a ship approached the coast she might be captured by stratagem; thus the haughtiness of the barbarians would be curbed, and when they could not obtain tea and rhubarb from the bounty of the great Emperor, they would become humbly submissive, and be content to comply with whatever his Majesty might be pleased to direct.

Taou-kwang thus became gradually convinced that he could curb the insolence of the barbarians; and many of his counsellors rejoiced at the prospect of a war, in which Chinese prowess might be shewn to advantage, and the great Emperor appear the victor. By such means, the desire of engaging in a sanguinary struggle was nourished; and a Chinese, pretending to be well acquainted with the character of foreigners, declared that herds of bullocks and sheep let loose upon them would be sufficient to drive their hosts

into the sea, if the crews dared to land on the Chinese shores.

All overtures for settling matters peacefully, though frequently made, were haughtily rejected; for the Celestial Empire desired to crush the proud barbarians. Taou-kwang heeded no longer the warnings of his wise consort, who died about this time of sheer grief. The men in the cabinet as well as in the council clamoured for war; and though the Emperor himself was very peacefully inclined, he could not suppress the public clamour; defensive preparations were made accordingly.

It is deeply to be regretted that human beings endowed with reason should ever have recourse to arms, to settle a matter which might be adjusted by arbitration; but it was the system of the Chinese monarchs to issue commands to foreign potentates, and never to listen to their remonstrances, or remove differences by an amicable conference.

Lin himself had gone so far in his overbearing pride, as to write a letter, quite in the style of Chinese superiority, to the Sovereign of Great Britain. The Emperor, therefore,

was much less inclined to enter into negotiations, or to pay the least attention to foreign proposals for the adjustment of differences. It would have seemed ridiculous if the Celestial Empire had condescended to send a minister to treat with the British representative. Such were the orders, and these must be sufficient: obey implicitly; this was the watchword.

Such was the state of affairs in the beginning of 1840. Orders were given from Peking to put the whole coast in a state of defence, and immense sums were lavished in making the preparations. The British fleet finally appeared, and efforts were made to induce the Chinese government to listen to proposals; but, according to the stringent orders promulgated all along the coast, these were disdainfully rejected. The strict commands were to fire, and, if possible, annihilate every vessel, and never to enter into any parley whatsoever.

Chusan was subsequently taken, and the Emperor ordered that all officers who fled, or abandoned their posts, should be sentenced to death; because it was their duty to die on the spot, and not to retreat in the hour

of danger. The orders to fight to the last were still more strenuously enforced; when, finally, the fleet appeared at the mouth of the Pei-ho, and the British commander insisted upon communicating direct with the supreme government.

Such a proceeding was not anticipated, and Taou-kwang was greatly astounded at seeing the foreigners, of whom he had entertained an innate dread, so near the seat of his power. In this emergency he had recourse to his trusty servant Keshen, a minister of most astute character; who instead of imitating the boisterous, undignified manner of all the other officers of government, appeared yielding and complaisant. He began to negotiate with great tact, declared the intention of his sovereign to look into these matters, and announced the decision of Taou-kwang to send him to Canton as commissioner. His sole object was to get the fleet from the mouth of the Pei-ho; for it was dangerous to provoke a quarrel, which sooner or later must have ensued, if the vessels had any longer remained in their stations.

The anxiety pervading the capital was now

very great. Taou-kwang saw all the dangers of a rupture with England in the true light, and that the contest carried on in the neighbourhood of Peking must have ended in his utter discomfiture.

There is an immense Chinese rabble ready to seize every opportunity to commit ravages upon industrious citizens, and to plunder the governmental stores, whenever the attention of the mandarins is directed towards the defence of the country, and their forces are beaten; and when the English took a city this was always the case: the mob completely plundered all the houses, and took away even doors and window-frames.

If this had happened on a large scale at the capital, the devastation would have been immense, and could never have been repaired, how strenuous soever the efforts, even if years had been spent for that purpose. If the prætorian bands had once been beaten, which no doubt would have been the case, the whole machinery of government would have been upset, and the most disastrous consequences would have ensued. Indeed, it is probable that the Emperor, once obliged to leave his capital, without

being able to reassemble his scattered forces after a defeat, could not have rallied again.

Such were the apprehensions that agitated Taou-kwang's mind; and they were well founded upon the precarious tenor of his power. If he allowed his minister to make promises which he never intended to fulfil; or if he, for the moment, entirely discarded all the warlike suggestions of his cabinet, it was from the impulse of terror. No one blamed Keshen for his measures; and the grandee, as soon as the fleet had left, hastened to act as intermediator—an armistice having been agreed upon.

A man of similarly pacific intentions, who knew well the strength of his own government, had been sent from Nanking as commissioner to Ningpo. This was Elepoo, who, from the first, saw the impossibility of contending with a naval power, and preferred the most disgraceful peace to a disastrous war.

The war-cry being for a moment hushed, the British fleet arrived in the eastern waters. When this was known at Peking, a total change of opinions took place; the danger was considered as visionary; punishment for

the insolence of the barbarians called for; and from all quarters of the vast empire, there arose one general cry of "Destruction to the barbarians! death to the whole race!"

The Empress-dowager was wrought upon to such a pitch, that she declared to her son that unless he waged war to the extermination of the wicked barbarian brood, his ancestors would never acknowledge him in Hades; that the English could not co-exist with the Chinese under the canopy of heaven: one must fall. The Celestial Empire must assert its dignity over those barbarian robbers, and administer a signal chastisement. It seemed as if all the Chinese dignitaries had lost their senses: they called for blood, extermination, destruction; there was to be no peace, until the whole English fleet was annihilated.

Keshen was not moved by these clamours: he well knew that all this was idle vapouring, and that peace would be forced upon the nation, whatever might be the language of its rulers. Throughout the whole affair he behaved with consummate skill: he yielded in fact nothing, and was profuse in polite expressions. He had flattered himself that this

would be sufficient; but found out too late that he had reckoned without his host. The military operations, and the utter discomfiture of the Chinese forces, obliged him to come to terms; the best that could have been made under existing circumstances.

For this act, Keshen, the only sensible man in the land, was denounced as a traitor to his country; and, before sentence had been pronounced, his whole property, amounting in silver alone to three millions sterling, was confiscated, and he himself summoned to the capital as a culprit with a chain round his neck. When the minister arrived at Peking, he heard that sentence of death had been passed upon him; and his enemies, of whom there were many, rejoiced in the prospect that it would soon be executed, and that he would die the death of a traitor. Taou-kwang, however, was too wise to sentence a useful servant, who had shewn so much tact in the management of affairs, to instant execution; he, therefore, ordered that he should remain in prison and await his pleasure. But all his possessions were confiscated, his very wife and concubines had been sold by auction;

and Keshen, who had been one of the richest men in the Empire, had not now the means to buy even a meal or a jacket. He would have sunk under this accumulation of misfortunes, if he had not been of a very elastic temperament; but he looked forward to a time when the government would return to reason.

Elepoo fared in nowise better. His crime was that of having acted up to the engagement entered upon, by giving back the English prisoners; instead of complying with subsequent directions to send them up to Peking, to grace the triumph of some imaginary conqueror, and then be cut to pieces.

The wife of a captain having been wrecked, and thus thrown into the power of the Chinese, was put into a cage, and carried about for show. Some mandarins suggested the idea of letting her pass for the sister of the barbarian Queen; and she would have had to suffer the most excruciating death in that capacity, if Elepoo's faithfulness had not delivered her up.

The whole cabinet was indignant at his conduct; he was not only denounced as a traitor, but also as a coward, and called to appear instantly in the presence of his exas-

perated sovereign. Dispirited and suffering he arrived at the capital, and appeared as a penitent kneeling at the gate. No notice was taken of him: he, though an old man, had to stop there several days, and was finally told that he had been sentenced to transportation to the Amour river, in the Chinese Siberia.

The most renowned heroes were now marched forward to meet the English in battle. Yukeen, the successor of Elepoo at Ningpo, wreaked his vengeance upon the British soldiers who had died on the island: their bodies were disinterred, thrown into quick lime, and then cast into the sea; the gravestone of a colonel was put in the walk leading to the haughty dignitary's rooms, to be trodden upon by every one. When he had thus glutted his revenge upon the dead, he flayed alive some Englishmen who had accidentally been caught; and then proclaimed in a public edict that he had cooled the courage of the barbarians, and felt confident that their forces would not dare to come and attack him.

Hitherto, the success of the British at Canton had been ascribed to the treason of Keshen, who was hated with bitter hatred; but when,

the imperial nephew, Yishan, took upon himself the command, and Yangfang, the renowned general who had obtained victories in Turkistan, appeared, the same result—utter defeat—attended their efforts.

No thundering edicts from the throne could inspire them with courage; they were hemmed in; and their soldiers, instead of fighting against the enemy, turned upon the people, and all their plans proved abortive. They wrote many reports of their conquests to their Imperial master, who at last disdained to believe them; for the ransom that was paid, and the utter discomfiture of the Chinese in all parts, spoke volumes against them. Yangfang went home in disgrace, and soon died of a broken heart. Yishan lived a disgraceful, voluptuous life, and affixed an indelible stain upon his family.

Yet he petitioned in favour of the idol temple of the Goddess of Mercy—in which building, near the walls of Canton, large stores of gunpowder had been kept—who, it was said, when the shells were thrown into the magazine, received them in her lap, and thus prevented their explosion. For this great service she was raised several steps in the

Pantheon. Taou-kwang agreed to it, and duly forwarded the act of canonization; he also sent some candles, which the Lama of Tibet had blessed, with incense to be burnt before her shrine. To such a degree is the mind of the Chinese under the dominion of superstition, that the highest authorities are, in a religious point of view, below the Malay; who at least worships one God above all.

The preparations for receiving the barbarians had been immense; but the vigorous measures of Lord Gough, Sir William Parker, and Sir Henry Pottinger, defeated all the plans. Amoy fell, Chusan came again into the hands of the English, and Yukeen finally had his heart's desire—an engagement with the barbarians.

He wished them to come close to the muzzle of his guns; but before this gratification had been afforded him, the fortifications were demolished by cannon and bombs, and his forces defeated; he himself being the first to flee to save his life. On his retreat he repented of his precipitancy, and attempted to drown himself to avoid the imputation of cowardice; he was, however, drawn out of the water by

a poor fisherman; but he afterwards swallowed some gold-leaf, and thus committed suicide.

A flaming account of Yukeen's prowess being sent to the court, Taou-kwang commanded that the coffin containing the remains of this faithful servant should be brought to the capital, and divine honours be paid to the corpse; his son had an audience with the Emperor, and received an office in anticipation; and all that was honourable and noble was attributed to him. But when the real state of affairs became known, to the surprise of all, it was ascertained beyond doubt that Yukeen's whole career had been one of vain boasting; that he had squandered the public money by millions, and then abandoned his post: in short, that his whole conduct, from first to last, had been one course of deceit. The reaction was strong: Taou-kwang decreed that the whole property of Yukeen's family, which was very considerable, should be confiscated, and all the honours bestowed on him recalled.

One of the heroes on this occasion was Yu-poo-yun, likewise a general of great renown

in the Turkistan wars; who strenuously advocated war in opposition to Elepoo, with whom he had previously been associated. When, however, he himself had to encounter the barbarians, he soon subdued his warlike spirit, and became a most humble, peaceful man. The Emperor gave him time to redeem his character from the reproach of cowardice; but not being able to do so, he was finally beheaded at the capital. Yu-poo-yun was one of the guardians of the gates of Peking, and of military rank corresponding with that of an European field-marshal.

CHAPTER XI.

Proposed plan for the defence of China and conquest of England.—Taou-kwang's apprehension for his capital.—Brilliant project of Hou-chunn.—Attempt at building steamers.—Expedition of Yi-king.—His defeat.—Emperor's desire for peace, and plans for obtaining it.—British fleet enters the Yang-tse-kiang.—Elepoo's letter to the Emperor.—Its effect.—Treaty of Nanking.—Its consequences.—Emperor's indignation against the "barbarians," and false notions about them.—Presumption of Chinese generals.—False reports of victories.—Anxiety of the Emperor during the war.—Punishment of the ministers who had urged the war.—Expense of the war.—Robbery of the Emperor and his indemnification.

THUS disaster had followed disaster up to the end of 1841; still the warlike spirit was not yet extinct. Some great men, who had derived their information respecting European affairs from Chinese colonists who visited the islands of the Indian Archipelago, brought forward a plan for defending China on a large scale, and carrying the war into Great Britain.

To effect this, it was first necessary to create a fleet thrice as numerous and strong as that of the English, and to station these immense vessels near Singapore and Anjeer, to intercept all the ships on their way to China, and thus annihilate the British fleet piecemeal, before it reached its destination. To obtain materials for shipbuilding, the forests of China were to be felled; but in order to provide models of ships for the grand design, English men-of-war had first to be taken. There was another suggestion equally sagacious, which was nothing more or less than to march an army of 300,000 men right through the deserts of Siberia and Russia to London, and thus put a stop to all farther operations!

These projects were sent to Taou-kwang, who admired the ideas, but feared that their practical execution was fraught with insurmountable difficulties. As no river in his Empire had been secure against foreign invasion, and all edicts against barbarians proved ineffective, Taou-kwang began to tremble for his capital; which could be approached very closely with small iron steamers, leaving only a few hours' route by land-car-

riage. Hou-chunn, the general at Peking, who stood in as high estimation amongst his countrymen as Ney did amongst the French, then suggested to build a steamer that would carry six thousand men, half divers and half gunners, and that could be worked at the rate of a mile in a few minutes. With this extraordinary vessel he was ready to face the whole British fleet; the moment he came in sight of it, the divers were to jump into the water and bore large holes in the bottoms of the men-of-war, whilst the gunners were to keep up an incessant fire.

Striking as this plan appeared, Taou-kwang doubted its practicability; for he had previously given orders to build some line-of-battle ships, and the officer entrusted with the behest, instead of executing the order, had committed suicide. Imitation steam-ships had likewise been attempted; and though externally they resembled the foreign vessels in every respect, there was no steam-engine to put the paddle-wheels in motion, and the paddles had to be turned like a treadmill.

Many of the works thrown up to keep off the barbarians had been erected by public con-

tributions, the subscribers expecting to be raised to high rank for their money. Large bodies of militia were also raised by some spirited individuals. The people, however, losing all confidence in their government, and becoming even distrustful of the aid of their gods, to whom they had first applied with such assiduity, soon became weary of lavishing money in a senseless war; millions upon millions had therefore to be taken from the national treasury. Yi-king, a very near relation of the Emperor, holding at that time the highest offices at court, was then despatched with a very large army to drive the barbarians into the sea: his orders were very strict not to allow a single individual to escape. But when within a few days' journey of the seat of war, he stopped at the celebrated city Loochoo, where he led a most disreputable life, like another Sardanapalus.

When, finally, the great army was assembled, in the beginning of 1842, all the operations of Yi-king consisted in kidnapping stray foreigners, and putting them in cages. He had thus collected prisoners of a great variety of races—for there were men of all colours and

nations in the British army—and he intended to sacrifice a great number of these unfortunate captives to the God of War; but the humanity of the British general, who generously sent back the Chinese prisoners, gave a different direction to his thoughts. His army was defeated in several engagements, and the main body remained for a long while inert in the camp; at length, the greater part was driven home by the want of pay and provisions, the superior officers having embezzled the money.

Successive reverses at last taught the Emperor that it was time to think about peace, otherwise the war would come to his own door. Most people who are so fond of recommending this scourge of the human race, do so when they are far away from its pernicious influence; the moment it comes in all its force to their homesteads, they begin to feel a real horror of it.

The Emperor at first endeavoured to strike terror into the barbarians, by sending Commissioner Lin, *incognito*, to the neighbourhood of Ningpo. This grandee had been degraded, and sentenced to transportation; he was, how-

ever, kept near the seat of war, and even appointed governor of the canals and rivers. He had at his own cost, when in Canton, maintained a company of volunteers, whom he took the trouble of drilling with very great care. On the approach of the English, however, these "braves" — the name by which they were called—left their employer, and he was reduced to the disgraceful necessity of hiding himself.

When it was found that Lin's presence could effect nothing, Keshen was fetched out of prison, and likewise sent *incognito* to Hung-choo, to recommence negotiations, if possible, upon the former basis. But his dishonour had gone before him: he was declared by all to be a traitor, and the governor of that place would not even admit him within the precincts of the city.

There remained, then, only Elepoo who could be made useful in this emergency; for he had obtained a very great name for probity, even amongst foreigners. As he had not yet reached his place of exile, he was recalled by Taou-kwang, and forthwith commenced his ourney, to make proposals for peace. He,

however, not having plenipotentiary powers, it was in vain that he asked for a cessation of hostilities, and pleaded the expediency of a compromise, by sending back the British prisoners.

The British fleet having finally entered the Yang-tse-kiang, it was thought that Woo-sung, which had been fortified the whole length of the shore, would prove a barrier to the encroaching barbarians. The governor-general was himself present, and to stimulate the courage of his soldiers, distributed small pieces of paper, calling upon the warriors to fight to the last. The general response was, "Wan-suy-yuy,"—long live the Emperor,—and the shouts of the multitudes of fighting men rent the air. These demonstrations, however, availed nothing against powder and shot: the fortifications were destroyed, and the whole army scattered.

When, finally, the British fleet rode safe in the Yang-tse-kiang, and had reached the first bend, there happened a total solar eclipse; and it was murmured that the sun of China had set for ever!

In Chin-kiang-foo one of the great advo-

cates for the war was the commandant; and it was here that the Tartar forces were nearly annihilated, and terror struck into the heart of all adherents of the Manchoo dynasty. Elepoo had slowly followed in the train of the expedition, and when he heard of the rout of his countrymen, anticipating the impression which their defeat would make upon the nation, he wrote to Taou-kwang that the struggle was no longer for adventitious claims, but for the throne: by peace, it might be preserved; by war, it would be lost. He painted in true colours the state of affairs, and then added, that being an old man, he was ready to bear all the punishment which his freedom might bring upon him: he was not far from the brink of the grave, and his last and most urgent advice would be, to make peace.

This letter, couched in very few words, had the desired effect; Taou-kwang's eyes were opened to the danger before him, and he actually gave orders that his effects should be packed up, that he might fly to some of the interior provinces. On this occasion, in the great haste and confusion, nine million

ounces of silver were stolen from the imperial private treasury.

On more mature reflection, however, and when the British forces were about laying siege to Nanking, Taou-kwang was assured that peace might be obtained; he, therefore, gave *carte blanche* for the conclusion of a treaty.

We have already, in the preceding pages, referred to Keying, a successful statesman, who in 1832 was commander-in-chief of the guards, president of several boards in the capital, and a man of great influence. Subsequent intrigues removed him from the court to Moukden, where he became military governor; but his name as a pacificator stood very high, and on that account Taou-kwang sent him, in the capacity of the Canton Tartar general, to try what could be effected by negotiations.

The idea seems then to have been prevalent at the court of Peking, that on the concession of some paltry advantages, or making some high sounding promises, as had been done two years ago at the Pei-ho, the whole fleet would return to Canton. Accordingly, Keying remained in the background, and

Elepoo was put forward as the man to effect this purpose; for as he held only a very subordinate rank, no responsibility could attach to him. But these expectations were disappointed by the firmness of the British plenipotentiary. Keying then thought it high time to step in to save the dynasty from ruin, and take upon himself all the responsibility of the measures. From the moment this statesman assumed the charge of affairs, he entered upon the business with great candour. He found an equally sterling character in the British plenipotentiary, Sir Henry Pottinger, and the negotiations proceeded successfully. Then, under the terror inspired by anticipated events, Taou-kwang conceded all; the treaty of Nanking was signed on the 20th August 1842, and the whole international relations of China with Great Britain totally changed.

This news created a great sensation throughout Europe as well as in China: the Chinese people perceived with astonishment that their great Emperor was a common mortal, like every other man; by no means exalted above the princes of the earth, but only their equal. One can form no adequate idea of the utter

amazement of the Chinese on perceiving that the "Son of Heaven" was not invincible, and that he was even fallible: a revulsion of feeling took place, such as had never been known before, and the political supremacy which China had so proudly asserted, was for ever lowered to the dust.

When the account of the conclusion of the treaty arrived at Peking, Taou-kwang could scarcely believe that the barbarians would keep faith, now that the whole Empire was in their grasp. From first to last he had desired to avoid the war, but was goaded into hostile measures by the unanimous clamour of his grandees; he saw with astonishment that one million after another vanished, to pay for the war, and that grandee after grandee was defeated; until at last there remained neither army nor navy, neither general nor admiral to command them had they existed, and not even a minister to negotiate a peace: for all the statesmen had been deterred by Keshen's fate from entering upon a similar career.

The Emperor was not sparing of denunciations and threats of utter destruction, if the barbarians would not instantly leave the coasts;

and he called upon the people to arm themselves *en masse*, and protect their lives and property against the insolent barbarians; but all these exhortations fell to the ground, for the government had no hold upon the patriotism of the nation. Some of his flatterers had told Taou-kwang at the outset that the barbarians inhabited a small island in the furthest part of the globe; for thus is England represented on the orthodox Chinese maps. Admitting even that their ships were strong and their cannon effective, still a war could not be continued by them for any length of time from such a distance, as supplies would soon be wanting. Some mischievous foreigners also had intentionally nourished Chinese presumption, and pointed out the impossibility of England ever making an impression upon such a large empire.

Every new general sent against the enemy made promises that he would exterminate the whole body in a short time; and plans were from time to time submitted to Taou-kwang's inspection, in which it was shewn that the whole barbarian forces would be surrounded, and in a short time annihilated. On one occa-

sion, a dissolute adventurer with a host of ruffians came over to Chusan, took away some of the ships' boats, burnt them on shore, and then actually sent pieces of them to the court of Peking, to prove that the whole British fleet had been destroyed by fire. Such reports, however untrue, were greedily caught at, and these pretended victories of the government formally published; but by these trickeries the administration lost ground in the estimation of the people, who easily saw through the deceit.

When, then, it was officially reported that the barbarian fleet, phœnix-like, had risen from its ashes, and was advancing to the old capital of the Empire, Taou-kwang's indignation knew no bounds. The whole time of the war had been a period of great anxiety to his mind: all festivities were suspended; even the warlike Empress-dowager made known that on her birthday no ceremonies would take place, and no public congratulations be received. To the parsimonious Taou-kwang, the immense sacrifice of money was the most disagreeable part of the whole enterprise: there seemed to be no end of supplies, no end to expenditure. And when enormous sums had been squandered for some visionary ob-

ject, the Emperor was perhaps told that the army which had cost so much, had to be disbanded for want of means; and that the large arsenals had been destroyed by the barbarians, the fortifications taken and blown up, the guns spiked and carried off, and the public treasury taken possession of. Then a thundering edict was issued to the commanding officer, which still more intimidated the mandarins, and rendered them entirely unfit to act in an emergency.

What, however, affected the Emperor most, was the fact that wherever the British arms proved victorious, the rabble gained the ascendancy, the government was entirely destroyed, and robbery and anarchy prevailed. The few Manchoos—the props of his authority—who, though fighting bravely, had on all occasions been defeated, presaged the same fate to his legions at the capital; he saw that his authority hung on a slender thread, and this consideration, if we may judge from the state papers of that time, frequently disturbed his slumbers.

The moment that peace was concluded, Taou-kwang considered it his first duty to punish the foremost champions of the war party, who, when sent against the enemy, had proved th-

most arrant cowards. They had all, without exception, engulfed immense sums, and not one was able to shew for what purposes the money had been spent. In this doom his near relations, Yi-shan and Yi-king were also comprised; because, as commanders-in-chief, they had acted in the most disreputable manner. Lung-wan had died from grief, for he could not see the triumph of the barbarians without repining; some had committed suicide, and others ran away. Many of the civilians and military officers, who could not help themselves, but had to surrender their cities, were treated with merciless severity, unworthy of a just monarch.

The next step was to ascertain the amount of expenditure; this was not much below sixty million ounces of silver, besides the money paid to the English; and yet not a single fortress, built at such cost, could stand an attack beyond a few hours: every one fell, without exception. This was indeed a severe lesson for a parsimonious man, who saw the money thus squandered lost for ever. The evils consequent upon the financial difficulties that existed before, were now augmented to an extent hitherto

unknown, and the government was verging towards a national bankruptcy.

There still remained some objects of vengeance upon which the Emperor could wreak his whole wrath. The nine million ounces of silver, which had been stolen from his own stores during the packing up for the intended flight, were not restored; and, as it was impossible to discover the authors of the theft, in the great turmoil that then prevailed, Taou-kwang now ordered that this sum should be refunded by the officers, small and great, who for thirty years successively had had the administration of the treasury: of those who were dead, their descendants, even to the third generation, had to indemnify the exchequer. This announcement created universal terror; many officials, and some of the highest Manchoo nobility were thrown into prison, because they could not make good their liability; and misery prevailed throughout the land. But the money had to be reimbursed, and after two years of the most severe extortion, the nine millions were replaced in the treasury; though the parties really guilty escaped.

CHAPTER XII.

Keshen restored to favour.—Renewal of the war proposed.—Taou-kwang's reception of the proposition, and address to the assembly.—Reply of the ministers.—Nankin treaty ratified.—Suicide of Wangling.—Death of Elepoo.—Foreign administration of Keying.—Murder of British subjects.—Outrage on foreign factories.—Treaties with France and the United States.—Toleration of Christianity.—Superstitious faith in idols destroyed.—Taou-kwang studies works on Christianity.—His favourable opinion of them.—Keying's belief in Christianity.—Propagation of Christianity legalized.—Roman Catholics' desire to monopolize the privilege frustrated.

When matters took the turn which Keshen had foretold, the Emperor ordered a reprieve of the sentence passed upon his sagacious councillor, who now stood in his presence as a common attendant; being the bearer of his pipe, and following him in that capacity to the privy council.

Some of the ministers, in whom the desire for war was not yet stifled, and who spoke

openly of Keying as a traitor to his country, were highly exasperated on perceiving the altered fortunes of the favourite now in the ascendant. They watched their opportunity, and when it was proclaimed that the British forces had left, and that the Canton populace had manfully withstood the barbarians, and were even ready to fight over again the battles of the great Emperor and restore the fortune of the army, they began to murmur at the peace.

They held a consultation, at which it was resolved to declare the treaty null and void, to denounce Keying as a traitor, and Elepoo as his abettor, and to proclaim the renewal of the struggle and the utter defeat of the barbarians necessary to save the honour of the country. Everybody who considered himself a patriot, and to whom the ascendancy of the Celestial Empire was dear, joined in the outcry; and the subject was duly laid before Taou-kwang in a conference.

He was sickened of the war, as every man of intelligence was; and to recommence the course which he had just now abandoned was repugnant to him; he, therefore, resolved to

quiet this sanguinary spirit for ever. Having praised the patriotic sentiments of his servants, and fully approved of them, he observed, that so weighty a matter required mature consideration, and begged them, therefore, to appear before him on the following day.

It was a very august assembly: nobles and mandarins of the most influential party, all attended. Taou-kwang asked whether they were still resolved upon war; and their answer was, — "To the entire extermination of the English race." Whereupon the Emperor gave his full assent, agreed to recall Keying, to punish Elepoo and all the friends of peace severely, and to re-establish the deadly enemies of the barbarians in their full power.

Every one was delighted with the prospect, and rejoiced, in anticipation, at the entire overthrow of the cowardly statesmen who had betrayed the birthright of the Celestial Empire, by acknowledging another potentate as the compeer of the Son of Heaven.

The sovereign, perceiving the general sensation of joy, continued to harangue his counsellors. "You know," he observed, "that all our armies sent against the hated race

have been beaten; that the navy has ceased to exist; that not one general has proved successful, but that all are degraded, or sentenced to severe punishment. It need not be told you that the treasury is exhausted, and that we have nothing to replenish it, as the sources of revenue in all the provinces visited by this dreadful scourge have been dried up." To this a general assent was given. "Still," he added, "you are for the resumption of the war, and I applaud your zeal in behalf of the honour of my person. To accomplish this an army is necessary, and one much stronger and better appointed than any of the former ones. I, therefore, commission you" (pointing to some of the most clamorous ministers) "to raise this army, to drill the men, and to place yourselves at the head. If you fail to exterminate the barbarians as you propose, you will have to undergo capital punishment instantly." Then, turning towards others, he remarked that the navy no longer existed, and that a new one, more powerful, and better adapted to cope with the barbarians than the former, ought to be created: with this honourable enterprise he charged them. Finally, he re-

quested that the rich individuals present should not only furnish the money for these undertakings in the first instance, but likewise bear the expenditure throughout the whole war; as the state could not afford to lose another sixty millions in a similar enterprise.

This speech had an extraordinary effect: every one present was struck dumb. Taoukwang requested his servants to come on the morrow, and give a decisive reply; but at this assembly every one was silent and grave. The Emperor asked the first who had so violently advocated war, whether he was ready to form the army, procure the means for its maintenance, and lead forth the troops to victory. A very polite excuse, expressing total inability to undertake such a task, was the answer. The second pleaded total ignorance of naval matters, having never even seen the sea; the third most emphatically declared, that he had not money sufficient for his own wants, and still less for such vast enterprises: every one advanced some obstacle or other; and amidst all the courtiers, not one was ready to lay down his life and property on the altar of the country.

Taou-kwang had patiently listened, and then declared that their ardour in behalf of their country was mere pretence: to wage war was impossible; peace ought to be the watch-word of all, and if any one dared again to speak of war, he should be considered worthy of death.

This speech effectually put a stop to all future bickerings: the Nanking treaty was ratified, and the country remained quiet. One minister, however, Wangling, declared that he would not survive the disgrace of his country, and went home from the council-table and hanged himself.

Elepoo, in the mean while, continued the negotiations, and died, at an advanced age, at Canton; his heart's desire—the conclusion of peace—having been accomplished. He was a very superstitious man; and during his illness never left off counting his beads. Keying was now entrusted with all foreign affairs; and, owing to his judgment and energy, matters proceeded without obstacle.

There were, however, two circumstances which might easily have rekindled the flames of war, if the individuals engaged in these

important negotiations had not acted with becoming prudence and forbearance. One was the murder, in cold blood, of a number of shipwrecked British subjects, Asiatics as well as Europeans, at Formosa. The authors of this treacherous and cruel act were called to account by the Chinese government; and though not punished, as had been promised, still they were denounced, and treated for a short time with rigour.

The other was the outrage committed by the Canton rabble on the foreign factories, when the news of the peace was generally known. This was construed into a victory; but the authorities gave an indemnification for all the losses, and the affair was thus settled.

Other nations, hearing of these extraordinary events, sent their envoys to form similar treaties. France and the United States of America had their representatives on the spot for this purpose; and both concluded treaties, which in the main resembled the English; containing, moreover, some additional provisions to the advantage of commerce.

Amongst the great changes that now took place, was the free toleration of Christianity

throughout the Empire. Idolatry had received a very decisive blow during the war: the hopes placed in idols by generals had been disappointed; the magnificent processions, the pilgrimages to shrines, the feeing of priests to invoke the destruction of the English by the power of the elements, had all been without effect. The temples were taken and the images destroyed, but still no avenging hand of the gods prevented the indignities: in many instances, the temples had been converted into arsenals or barracks, yet the patron saint or genius of the building had never done a single thing for the protection of the charge entrusted to him. The Chinese are an observing people, and having so many proofs of the impotence of their idols, they finally ridiculed their own superstition, and began even to be incensed against the priests who misled them.

Taou-kwang, who in his maturer years had become very superstitious, was latterly prevailed upon, in some few instances, to punish the Christians, as being in league with the barbarians. At the same time the Scriptures, and other Christian books, which had been circulated along the coast, were sent by the

local mandarins for his perusal. He notified in the gazette their being in his possession, and declared them unclassical. Not long afterwards, a Manchoo New Testament fell into his hands; he and his whole court read it attentively, and were thus favourably disposed towards the doctrines of Christianity. He afterwards, at the conclusion of the Nanking treaty, obtained a great many Christian works; and as his mind was greatly disturbed, he perused them with far greater attention than he would have done in ordinary times. The result of this study was a declaration, to the effect that these books taught the people virtue, and ought not to be prohibited, but circulated.

It was, therefore, very natural that, at such a juncture, the conclusion of the Nanking treaty should have given rise to different ideas of the religion of the west. Keying, a thinking, practical man, had no predilection for idolatry; the futility of which was very clear to him. To judge from his own declaration, he believed Christianity to be true; and therefore had no hesitation in begging his master to grant, at the suggestion of the

French envoy, general toleration for this religion.

This was accordingly done; and, for the first time in Chinese history, there was legal permission given to propagate Christian doctrines. In former times this privilege had depended upon the personal inclination of the Emperors, and they extended or rescinded the liberty according to their pleasure: now, however, the doctrines could be openly preached.

A Roman Catholic dignitary, wishing to interpret this permission as extending to Roman Catholics only, requested a local officer to proclaim that only persons who told their beads, worshipped images and the cross, were included in this toleration. This insidious distinction was, however, at the application of the British plenipotentiary, entirely negatived subsequently, and full liberty granted to all Christian denominations.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ports opened to foreigners.—Restrictions on foreign intercourse. — Unsuccessful attempt to improve financial affairs.—Rise of democratic ideas.—Municipal authorities demand a voice in state affairs.—Militia proposed. —Monster meetings and riots.—Effects of the sale of offices.—Partial administration of justice.—Increase of robbers.—Fears for Taou-kwang's government.—The Emperor's popularity.—Trade improved.—Revenue falls off.—Avarice of Taou-kwang.—His illness.—Attempt to restore the native government.—Anticipations of Hwuy-wang.—Competitors for the throne.—Recovery of Taou-kwang.—His compromise with Hwuy-wang. —His love of peace.—His desire for popularity.— Favours conferred in honour of the birthday of the Empress-dowager.—Advancement of Keshen.

A NEW era had now commenced. Five ports; namely, Canton, Amoy, Foochoo, Ningpo, and Shanghae, were open to foreign enterprise; and the intercourse of the natives with other nations could no longer be restricted as here-

tofore. To the north of these ports, the channel of Shanghae affords a medium of communication with the interior; and had the limits to excursions not been circumscribed, had the liberty of travelling in China been allowed to all foreigners, the results must have been extraordinary; but by drawing a line of demarcation, enforced by very heavy penalties, much good that might have arisen was rendered nugatory.

One of the first measures after the war, was to render the finances more flourishing. This, however, met with a very determined resistance. Partly from the intolerable exaction of the mandarins, partly from contempt of their power, which had utterly failed during the war, the people resisted the tax-gatherer. Soldiers being then ordered to enforce the claim, were in most cases beaten back; the government was, therefore, obliged to effect a compromise, and to hush up the matter. This very disastrous enterprise begat similar resistance in other parts of the Chinese dominion, and the revenue suffered to an enormous extent.

It had been proved beyond all contradic-

tion, that the mandarins were common mortals; and that the great Emperor, also, did not sway the whole world, as he pretended, but was subject to defeats, as well as all other potentates. This made a very deep impression upon the nation, and democratic assemblies, in which the rights of man were declared, rose in every part of the land. The elders and gentry took the lead in this matter, and demanded that in all measures in which the happiness of the people was concerned, they should first be consulted: if there was anything that did not suit their wishes, they instantly remonstrated; and if this proved ineffectual, they proceeded with an immense crowd to the government offices, and carried by force what was denied to courtesy.

In Canton and the environs, a belief prevailed that the populace could beat the barbarians, and applications were made to government for permission to wear arms and organize a numerous militia. The leaders of this movement were demagogues, who, when they saw their power thus established, held monster meetings, where they decided all important questions. Many functionaries, see-

ing the impossibility of stemming the popular current, sided with the people, and put themselves at the head of these movements. Every effort was made to rule by the masses, and to establish practically the truism that government exists on account of the people, and not the people on account of government; and the power of the administration was consequently much weakened.

Whilst this operated very advantageously in circumscribing the arbitrary power of the mandarins, it unhinged, on the other hand, the whole existing system of patriarchal despotism, and gave rise to much anarchy.

A prefect having on one occasion beaten an innocent man in the streets, the sufferer appealed to his fellow-citizens, collected a crowd of more than ten thousand, and proceeded directly to the establishment of the obnoxious mandarin, which was burnt down and razed to the ground; a declaration being made, that in such a manner the sovereign people would avenge themselves. The military were called out, but would not attack the people; and the Government, utterly powerless, had to overlook the insult.

A Tartar general having beaten a woman, who used to importune him by begging near his house, she shewed the marks of her stripes to the passers-by in a crowded thoroughfare, and had a tablet stuck up calling upon the people to revenge her cause. In the evening a mob assembled, penetrated into the city, smashed all the furniture in the general's house, and then seized the grandee himself, laid him flat upon the ground, and gave him double the number of blows inflicted on the woman.

Similar scenes of outrage and popular revenge occurred in many parts of China, and the ascendancy of the populace daily increased. Men of the worst character, gifted with a glib tongue, put themselves at the head of the movement, and did incalculable mischief. The mandarins were often obliged to buy off these demagogues, and make their peace by very large and important concessions. Thus the whole state of society underwent a change such as had never been anticipated. The people armed themselves, and paraded in large masses, ostensibly for the purpose of exterminating robbers, but in reality to terrify the mandarins.

We must add to this, that the sale of offices became more and more common; that many of the functionaries were worthless men, utterly unfit for their situation, and that the hatred they excited doubly augmented the spirit of popular resistance.

In many instances, the demands of the people were most unreasonable; yet still they were granted: not unfrequently to the great injury of the applicants. In others, when requests were most reasonable, being founded upon the existing state of affairs, they were perhaps not acceded to; and their refusal provoked a long and ruinous struggle.

Amidst all this turmoil, citizens and peasants turned politicians, and neglected their work; great poverty and misery were the consequences, and only a few, urged by sore experience, returned to their useful and profitable occupation. Favoured by such circumstances, large bands of robbers assembled and committed terrible ravages upon the country; indeed, they became at length so numerous and powerful as to set the Government at defiance, and to make the forces brought against them contemptible.

Many anticipated that Taou-kwang's government would not be able to withstand such rude shocks. In this, however, they were mistaken: it is the policy of the Chinese administration to adapt itself to circumstances, and to yield, instead of putting the supreme authority in jeopardy by firm resistance.

The Emperor, hearing of all these commotions, and being accurately informed as to their causes, instantly took the popular side. He threw the blame upon the mandarins, appointed substitutes for those who had been accused, praised the popular leaders, remitted the taxes that had been refused by an act of grace, and thus rendered himself a most popular monarch. Every one in the cabinet was now for measures to gain the favour of the multitude; the laws were relaxed, frequently to the great injury of well-disposed citizens, and the people were again and again termed children of the Emperor.

The sacrifices at which peace had been bought were, indeed, not slight. The sums which the government had engaged to discharge were, however, paid with scrupulous

punctuality, and the articles of the treaty kept with tolerable exactitude. Commerce was thus greatly benefited, and the amount of duties considerably increased. Yet in all other branches of revenue, the falling off was very considerable; so much so that the stanchest ministers began to tremble for the future.

Whilst, however, the national treasury was empty, Taou-kwang's was full. Even during the war, he had been accumulating large sums of money from the confiscated property of unsuccessful grandees; who were, without distinction, sentenced to heavy penalties, or who lost their all by a single stroke of the vermilion pencil. With increasing years the avarice of Taou-kwang increased; he would not part with a single ounce of silver, which lay then in an immense heap, useless to himself and others: his heart was entirely in his treasure, and he felt wretched if he could not constantly survey the glittering baubles spread before him.

In the summer of 1845, Taou-kwang again fell ill; his disease was of a dangerous nature, and he was verging towards eternity.

The expectation of his death rekindled the ambitious spirit of all parties, and they contested very strenuously for the mastery.

For many years the patriotic spirit of the influential Chinese had nourished the idea of forming an association for the restoration of the Chinese dynasty of Ming. This being a very dangerous project, was kept secret; and the members of the society being now in power, and possessed of wealth, no proceedings had been taken against them; as it was not thought expedient to drive matters to extremity. Now was their time, therefore, for putting all their power in motion, and endeavouring to obtain their object.

They would have succeeded, if they had been able to fix upon a man worthy the rank of emperor; but there were too many competitors: every one considered himself entitled to ascend the throne, and would not permit his partner in the perilous struggle to attain to that high honour. Thus their efforts were crippled, and their forces divided.

Much more powerful and united were the adherents of Hwuy-wang; who, as the nearest relative of blood, the most influential prince to

whom of right the throne belonged, and the wisest amongst the courtiers, stood foremost in claiming the succession. Nothing was left untried to secure to him that dignity, and he rejoiced in the prospect of soon swaying the great Empire.

Taou-kwang had no legitimate heirs: two sons born of Chinese concubines were the only legal claimants; and according to the letter of the law they could not succeed, although their mothers had been nationalized as Manchoos. Who, therefore, should succeed were it not Hwuy-wang, whom all looked upon as the most worthy of the princes? Taou-kwang urged the succession of his son, then fourteen years of age; but it seemed as if the whole court were ready to rise in open rebellion, and the idea was therefore dropped. Besides the above competitors, there were Manchoo nobles of high standing, who had rendered great services, and therefore thought they had a right to the throne.

Matters would have come to an outbreak, if Taou-kwang had not unexpectedly recovered. Every one believed him on his deathbed; but a favourable crisis ensued, he gradually re-

covered strength, and resumed his duties. Never was disappointment greater: though all parties rejoiced; each thinking that it was better to have the old monarch again on the throne, than to see a rival occupy the seat of power.

Taou-kwang never forgave the indecent haste with which his people had acted, when he was apparently approaching the grave. It was to him a bitter thought, that men who behaved so servilely before him when in full possession of the imperial authority, should so greedily become the partisans of another presumptive ruler. He looked upon his brother as too formidable a rival, whom he could not offend with impunity; he, therefore, effected a compromise, and requested Hwuy-wang to adopt one of his sons as his own; and forced from him the promise, that if ever he ascended the throne, this boy should be crown-prince. Thus peace was again restored, and all plotters agreed that they would wait until the decease of the Emperor, before carrying out their plans.

Taou-kwang's maxim was, let there be peace in my time; and acting on this sentiment, he

overlooked political offences, rather than have them brought to light and proceed against the culprits. He wished to be popular at his court, in the capital, and throughout the whole Empire; and made many sacrifices to attain that object.

His adopted mother had now reached her seventieth year, and wishing to give some substantial proofs of the high estimation in which she was held, Taou-kwang remitted the arrears of taxes, amounting to about fourteen million in sterling money. One might praise the magnanimity of the monarch, but for knowing the fact that the outstanding debt was entirely hopeless: to make a virtue out of necessity, however, was very politic. He prohibited at the same time the customary autumnal assizes, and the execution of all criminals who were on the list; prisoners who had committed only slight crimes were set at liberty, and convicts on their way to exile were reprieved. His hatred against the officers who had behaved in so cowardly a manner in the last war had now subsided, and many of them were recalled.

Keshen, who had long been in attendance

upon his master, witnessed this entire revulsion of feeling, and saw the changes which followed each other so rapidly, with indescribable pleasure. Taou-kwang soon perceived that what Keshen had foretold was only too true, and that the treaty concluded by his discarded minister was far more favourable than Keying's; and perceiving that he could not have been very far wrong, and experiencing, perhaps, a twinge of conscience, appointed him Resident in Thibet. This is a very lucrative station, in which rapacious men can soon fill their coffers with gold; and Keshen was too well versed in these arts to neglect such an opportunity. He remained there several years, during which he overruled the wishes of the Dalai Lama and the native nobility, obtained the entire ascendancy, and returned, richly laden with official booty, to become governor-general of the large province of Szechuen.

CHAPTER XIV.

Taou-kwang's return to idolatry. — Ineffectual prayers for rain. — Change of ministers. — Muchangah. — Paouhing. — Success of Keying's negotiations. — His sons. — His daughter. — His advancement. — He introduces improvements. — The Emperor arrests his measures. — Laishangah undertakes the direction of the finances. — Taou-kwang's pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors. — His fits of superstition. — Celebration of the birthday of the Empress-dowager. — Fortification of the Yang-tse-kiang. — Cause of financial difficulties. — Loss to the exchequer from the smuggling of salt. — Indirect taxation proposed. — Plans for increasing the revenue. — Extent, population, and revenue of China compared with those of Russia and the British Empire. — Embezzlement by functionaries. — Character of the mandarins. — Disastrous consequences of the defalcation in receipts. — Chusan restored to its government.

It had been a very dry summer; and Taou-kwang, immediately after his recovery, again had recourse to the idols, and frequently prostrated himself to pray for rain. His brothers did the same, but their supplications were in-

effectual: hours were spent in prayers, but the images heeded them not. The heat had so scorched the land that it was impossible to gather a harvest from the parched soil, and the public granaries had to be opened to supply the immediate wants of the Peking populace.

The late war had brought a different set of men into the cabinet. Muchangah, who had now for several years been premier, never gave his advice boldly, but always waited to hear his master's sentiments, and then re-echoed them. He, therefore, could not have been accused of incapacity or misconduct, and any blame attaching to his measures was equally referable to his master. He was naturally inclined for peace, and with his whole heart accorded in this respect with Taou-kwang. In addition to his already numerous offices and titles, he was created inspector-general of the troops, and thus the military power was likewise entrusted to him. Through him all the documents were transmitted, and he enjoyed the highest confidence, which was never disturbed.

His coadjutor, Paouhing, was governor-general of Szechuen, and did not, therefore,

appear at the capital. Though he was accused of incapacity and imbecility, yet Taou-kwang took his part, subsequently called him to Peking, and when he had there ended his days, he wrote a high eulogy upon his character for probity and uprightness.

Keying's services were very great, and though Taou-kwang might smart for the loss of the twenty million dollars paid to the English, which he could very ill spare, he nevertheless admired the sagacity of the servant which had averted general loss and ruin: all his negotiations had been brought to a successful issue; he had conciliated the foreign powers, and could boldly face his enemies, who accused him of high treason, and ask them, "What have you done for your country?"

To shew the high estimation in which he was held by his sovereign, his sons were advanced to high stations. His daughter held a most influential rank in the harem. Did anything happen to disturb the good understanding, it was she who redressed all grievances, and put matters again in a fair train: her kind, soothing hand removed many

sorrows from the brow of her father; and she was his principal prop, when, far away from the seat of power, a single mischance might have sent him for ever into exile.

Keying was now appointed assistant minister, though holding still his post of governor-general; and he also obtained a peacock's feather as a reward. At the seat of government, he was much despised and hated by the populace, because he had allowed the barbarians to conclude a treaty, and had been on friendly terms with them. He heeded not the bitter reproaches uttered against him, but endeavoured, by some means or other, to introduce improvements into the whole system. For this purpose, he had cannon cast according to the exact model of the foreign guns, and sent them up to the capital. The Chinese likewise imitated the shrapnel-shells, and other missiles; and Keying endeavoured, likewise, to introduce steam navigation: he even intended, if he could obtain permission, to proceed on a tour of inquiry, as Chinese ambassador to Europe.

All these plans were in a fair way of being carried into effect, when Taou-kwang was

alarmed by some advocates of ancient abuses, at the altered course of events: he began to fear that the proposed improvements from the west would require the employment of foreigners; and that they, instead of humbly remaining servants, would very soon become masters.

No arguments shewing the great advantages that would accrue from the plans proposed, could persuade the Emperor to assent to them. The fleet, partly constructed on an European model, remained near the Bogue forts, whilst pirates ravaged the coast; and the steamer that had been constructed at Canton, was found, when completed, to have an extraordinary defect, that of being stationary; for nothing could move the paddle-wheels. Thus was Keying defeated in many of his proposed designs, and China remained what it had always been—an automaton, moving only in a certain routine. All the bright prospects of the march of intellect and its beneficial effects vanished: yet not for ever.

The finances were in such a hopeless condition, that none dared to undertake the direction of them, except Laishangah, a

Mongol of a most determined character and fearless nature. He had been president of the colonial board, and knew nothing of the difficulties of his new situation; yet he persevered in it to this time, and is still at the head of affairs.

His predecessor had lost the situation by declaring that there was a deficit in every province. Taou-kwang thereupon sent round a circular, calling upon all governors and lieutenant-governors to furnish him with a correct list of the arrears, and the actual annual income. An account of this was to be published; and the various functionaries were to be asked, What measures should be adopted, in order to avert a general bankruptcy?

Everything being now quiet, Taou-kwang ventured again, in 1846, on a pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors; whence, however, he soon returned. Falling again into superstitious fits, he went frequently to the temples; worshipping, especially, the black dragon; and notwithstanding his parsimony, he made great presents to the Lamas, and treated the priesthood in a very liberal manner.

The birthday of the Empress-dowager was

to be celebrated in the most magnificent style, and Taou-kwang therefore ordained, that every person in the whole Empire, above eighty years of age, should receive, on that memorable day, ten catties of meat and a piece of silk. When, however, the lists were drawn up, the computation of the cost made, and it was found that this munificence would cost above a million of ounces of silver, the Emperor withdrew his liberal vote, and substituted a badge of rank, which cost very little.

The Emperor having been very much chagrined on beholding the ease with which the British fleet proceeded up the Yang-tse-kiang, without any effective opposition, now sent a trustworthy servant, Pei-chung, who had been for some time governor-general of the Keangnan and Keangse provinces, to fortify the river. He collected money and made many preparations for that purpose; and when all was in readiness, Laishangah, the great financier, came to inspect the whole, and pass his approval upon it.

There were long walls, with innumerable port-holes and guns, constructed in the Chinese manner, so as to require for actual defence

ten thousand men; but in time of need these would be quite useless, being too much exposed to the shot of an enemy. Some river boats were likewise built, and all with the greatest secrecy, lest the barbarians should take umbrage. A flotilla of steamers, for which this river is admirably adapted, might have been built with the same outlay, and would have proved an effective aid to the public service.

The year 1846 brought a recurrence of financial difficulties, more serious and threatening than the former ones. In every other country, the revenues increase with the increase of the population; in China, the contrary appears to be the case. The population seems to have reached that point which some of our political economists consider as the *ne plus ultra* of population; though it is only an imaginary limit derived from the existing state of society. The land is subdivided into small parcels, and each family has to live on a spot which scarcely supplies it with sufficient nourishment, and still less affords the means of paying taxes. Thus the dense popu-

lation renders a regular system of taxation a matter of impossibility.

Next to the land-tax, the principal resource of government is the tax on salt; which is sold by monopolists, under the direction of mandarins. Latterly, the smuggling of this article had caused great losses to the exchequer, and many of the monopolists became bankrupt, and were unable to pay their liabilities; the State thus suffering immense losses. There are a hundred other articles that might have been taxed; but the statesmen of China preferred a direct impost upon one of the necessaries of life, though the burthen of it fell upon the mass of poor people.

Many consultations were held as to the ways and means of indemnification for these losses: indirect taxation was proposed, but rejected as a novelty; tobacco, spirits, and a variety of luxuries, were represented to be lawful objects of taxation, but objected to because there was no precedent for levying money upon them. Finally, about a year after Keying had reached the capital, a committee was formed, to take these matters under consideration. It was then agreed that the mines

should be opened; a measure previously considered fraught with insurmountable difficulties and dangers for the country, as it attracted so large a number of the rabble ready to rise against the government. Savings were, moreover, to be effected, by withdrawing for several years the salaries to both low and high civil authorities; and all the existing branches of revenue were to be, if possible, increased. Such was the result of the deliberations; but only the first of the suggestions was carried into effect.

China has an area of 60,000 geographical square miles, and about 108,533,000 English acres under rice cultivation; on which, not including the lands for vegetable production, three hundred million of human beings have to live. The dependencies are Manchooria with 34,300 square miles, and, according to the account of government, only 4,300,000 inhabitants: perhaps not one-third of the actual number; Mongolia about 91,300 geographical square miles, numbers perhaps 15,000,000 inhabitants; Tibet, 30,200 square miles, with about 6,000,000; Bokhara and Turkistan, 27,300 square miles with 6,000,000 to 8,000,000

inhabitants. The British Empire has 296,180 square miles with 203,000,000 inhabitants; Russia, including its ice-fields, 368,276 square miles, with 62,000,000 inhabitants.

If we compare the revenues of the respective countries, the discrepancy is still more glaring. Including all the items of revenue, provincial and municipal, China does not yield above thirty-three million per annum in sterling money. Of this, in days of yore, thirteen million went to the general supreme government, and in kind—rice, pulse, and silks—perhaps four million more. Yet in 1846, according to the official statement, only seven million eight hundred and twenty-two thousand pounds reached the court, and only one-third of the tribute in kind. The falling off was, therefore, very considerable, and Taou-kwang deeply lamented the state of things.

The greatest drain upon the finances was embezzlement by government functionaries. Since the introduction of notorious harpies in the capacity of officers, this evil had become more extensive; and the small sums obtained from the sale of offices were swallowed up tenfold by these greedy adventurers.

The extortions which have always been more or less practised have likewise most detrimentally affected the finances, and dried up many sources of revenue. These are, however, evils engrained in the Chinese character, to eradicate which all endeavours have proved fruitless. There is neither honesty nor principle in most of the mandarins; and if any man were strictly to attend to his duties, and never to take a farthing beyond his dues, he would not be able to bribe his superiors, and consequently would very soon lose his office.

The great defalcations in the revenue had the most disastrous consequences. Government being unable to pay its servants, the latter were obliged to shift for themselves; and often had recourse to the most oppressive means of extortion, by which the people were greatly excited, and frequently broke out in open rebellion. Robbers gained confidence, for the forces marched against them were insufficient to suppress their outrages; and the coast began to swarm with pirates, the navy being utterly unable to offer any opposition to the marauders. Complaints came in from all quarters; and edicts were issued without number;

but no improvement was made in the wretched condition of the police, nor were the means of defence rendered more efficacious.

It was in this year that China fulfilled all its pecuniary engagements with the British, and Chusan was accordingly restored to the Chinese government. This island, under a proper administration, might have reached the highest prosperity, and diffused the blessings of civilization in all the surrounding countries.

CHAPTER XV.

Extended empires of England, Russia, and China.—Efficacy of Chinese power.—Rising in 1847.—Cashgar taken by the rebels, and Manchoo forces routed.—Unusual measures for repelling the enemy.—Imperial proposals accepted.—Recapture of Cashgar.—Treacherous conduct of the Koja of Kokand.—Yis-han's suggestion of the removal of restrictions on commerce acted upon.—Beneficial results therefrom.—Lin's erroneous opinion of the resources of the southern powers of Asia.—Policy of the Emperor towards the surrounding states.—Reverence of the Emperor for sacred things.—Anti-national exclusive system.—Border war.—Advancement of Lin.—Rebellion on the western frontiers.—Treacherous and blood-thirsty conduct of Lin.—His accusation, acquittal and reward.—His death, and character.—Destruction of crops by inundation.—Direful consequences.—Difficulties arising from a want of the circulating medium of the precious metal.—Remedies for these evils.

By a gradual course of conquests, the three largest empires in the world have gradually been approximating towards each other's fron-

tiers. England, from the most distant west, has extended its power, and its colonies now border on Tibet, which China, from the farthest east, took under its protection; Russia, the colossus of Europe, has traversed the ice-fields of eastern Asia, unmindful of dangers and difficulties, and furnished an extensive frontier to Mongolia; which may be considered as incorporated with China.

Regardless of sound policy, all three have extended their power beyond reasonable bounds; and having succeeded beyond their expectations, have had too much reason to regret their ambition. But all three co-operate in keeping within due bounds the hordes of Asia; which, but for this, would long ago have made more of those disastrous incursions, by which whole regions have been utterly destroyed, and many nations exterminated. Such ravages have taken place periodically, and changed the very face of the globe; but now these powers operate, with their combined forces, to preserve the world from similar calamities.

The country that effects most with the smallest means, is China. Its army on the frontiers must appear burlesque, when compared

with the well-appointed warriors of its two neighbours; but these contemptible soldiers effect what the most powerful states, with all the western improvements, could scarcely hope to accomplish; for through their means the most unruly nations, such as the Usbecks, Calmucks, and Kinghis, are kept in a state of subjection.

We have already mentioned one exception to this general rule, and are constrained again to speak of a very strong rising in 1847, during which the city of Cashgar and another place were taken, and the whole of the Manchoo forces routed.

In former times this would have induced the Peking court to despatch forthwith a very large force, and expend several millions in a useless campaign; but now the means used to repel the enemy were quite different. A distinguished man of the diplomatic corps repaired to the seat of war, and commenced negotiations; these were very much protracted, and the enemy, consisting of a large number of very bigoted Bokharians, made greater and greater inroads into the Chinese territory. This state of things had lasted for some time,

when large sums of money arrived, and the offer of an immediate armistice was made.

The leaders of the Mahomedans consulted with each other, to decide whether it would be more to their advantage to continue to plunder, or to accept the imperial bounty; and on mature consideration, the opinions inclined towards the latter. As, moreover, there was considerable danger in the former proceeding, and experience had shewn that the Usbecks were routed in the end, some of the descendants of the ancient Kodas, who had been expelled by the Chinese, again most strenuously argued that the country was theirs, and ought of right to be reconquered by the true believers; but their argument availed nothing against the glittering offer of the Emperor. An attempt upon Yarkand had, likewise, miscarried; and all the warriors of the Crescent were agreed that nothing would be gained in the end by fighting.

It was, therefore, unanimously resolved to adopt a medium course, and allow the Manchoos to take the two cities by military force; stipulating, at the same time, for the safety of the inhabitants.' This was done; the

imperial troops reaped much honour in recapturing Cashgar, a splendid account of their achievements was forwarded to Peking, and published in the "Peking Gazette," and a treaty was concluded with the Koja of Kokand.

This worthy had, as on the former occasion, looked only to his own advantage, and had in turn betrayed both friend and foe. He now appeared as mediator; received, as such, a round sum of money; presented himself as a faithful vassal to his imperial Majesty, and was now formally acknowledged as an ally, who was to guard the frontiers in the direction of Bokhara.

Great was the joy of Taou-kwang on hearing the issue of his measures; and the diplomatist was raised ten steps above the general. It is remarkable that this convention was finally ratified by Yi-shan, his nephew; the very individual who also concluded the ransom of Canton for six millions. On that occasion he sent the heads of some English soldiers, to convince his master that, notwithstanding the amicable arrangements, the chiefs of the barbarians had duly been decapitated. Now, however, he sent nothing but good advice;

which was, fortunately for the country, strictly followed.

All these collisions had arisen from the restrictive system of commerce, which was carried out with great severity. Yet the revenues arising therefrom were so trifling, compared with the enormous expenditure incurred, that, to remedy the evils caused by it, Yi-shan suggested that the trade should be thrown entirely open.

Taou-kwang, who had a keen sense of his own interests, began to calculate the loss and gain; he balanced both carefully; and then declared that, once for all, he abolished all restrictions upon commerce, which should henceforth be free. The effects were most beneficial, and were felt throughout the whole land: merchants from western and southern Asia thronged thither, and the fairs of Yarkand and Cashgar assumed a very busy appearance. Since that time no further difficulties have occurred.

It was Commissioner Lin who first suggested that the southern powers of Asia ought to be rendered serviceable in the war with England. He foolishly supposed that Cochin-

China, taking part in the quarrel, would be able to fit out a large fleet to intercept the English ships; that the Birmahs would make a diversion, and the Goorkhas and Affghans could be roused to join in the war. These were very crude ideas, suggested by some foreigner; but the Commissioner easily caught at them, because such alliances, while they might prove very serviceable in the management of affairs, would cost nothing.

Nearly a century ago some ambitious courtier at Peking encouraged the warlike Keen-lung to try to possess himself of India, as the power of the Great Mogul had become decayed. He listened with great attention to this proposition, which had great interest for one with his ardent desires of conquest, and he commenced with an attack on Birmah; but two campaigns ended in defeat, and the project was ultimately abandoned.

Now, however, it was the policy of China to conciliate those states, and not to bring on a war; the tribute-bearers, therefore, who came successively to the coast, were received with uncommon politeness: instead of the contempt formerly shewn towards them as the mere

messengers of vassals, they had an audience, during which Taou-kwang condescendingly inquired into all the affairs of their nation; and when he sent them back, it was with the richest presents and the most flattering letters.

Thus the chiefs were to be attached to the Chinese interest. With none, however, was this so much the case as with the ambassador from Katmand, after the revolution that took place in the affairs of that country. That officer was several times summoned before the Great Emperor, and distinguished from the crowd of sycophants; his master received the peacock's feather, with rank and title, and his name was inscribed amongst the most obedient vassals of the Celestial Empire. Thus the bonds between these two countries were henceforth to be considered as indissoluble.

In regard to Tibet, the customary policy was observed: the country was brought more and more under the Chinese influence, until it resembled a province; all power was entrusted in the hands of the resident there, and Keshen most strenuously seconded his master's intentions; so that on his departure for his new

government, the nation, its nobles, and the Dalai Lama, were entirely under the jurisdiction of mandarins.

The struggle had been long and toilsome, but it was successful in the end. Taoukwang, however, was extremely devout, and received the envoys of the priest with great honour. The idols, rosaries, candles, and incense-sticks sent from Tibet were to him sacred things, highly prized, and only to be bestowed upon favourites, or given on extraordinary occasions, to be burned at festivals or during grand processions. Thus the spiritual dominion of the priest remained unimpaired, and was used on all occasions to enforce the imperial authority amongst the Mongols.

A party of wild Sikhs having crossed the borders, and invaded the Tibetan frontier, the jealousy of English or Hindoo travellers had very much increased. The former were allowed to ramble about, and even treated with respect; but they could obtain no provisions, and were, therefore, obliged to retrace their steps. All along the frontier, guards were stationed, whose duty it was to give instant notice of the arrival of a stranger, and to transmit this

intelligence to all points, that the Chinese exclusive policy might be carried out to its full extent. All foreign connections that had previously existed were cut off, and not the least hope allowed of resuming an intercourse with those regions. In preventing this, the foresight of Taou-kwang had accomplished his aim.

Though the greater nations were in friendly relations with China, some of the smaller frontier tribes gave much trouble to government; amongst others the chiefs of Kokonor, a very independent, unruly race, who, though nominally acknowledging the supremacy of China, are very arbitrary in their proceedings, and are often at open war with the mandarins. They had made various inroads into the country and committed great ravages, causing much terror in the surrounding region. Even an envoy of the Dalai Lama, with them a very sacred person, was plundered on his way to Pekin. However reluctantly government took the field, it was nevertheless obliged to proceed vigorously, and a long desultory border war commenced, in which the cattle and other property of the Chinese were repeatedly carried off by the enemy.

The late Commissioner Lin had gradually regained favour. He was at first allowed to return from exile, because it was asserted that he did much to encourage the clearing of land in those regions; a very meritorious deed in the eyes of government. He was next made treasurer, then lieutenant-governor, and finally governor-general of Yunnan and Kweichoo.

At that time a very formidable rebellion broke out on the western frontiers. The inhabitants are not Chinese, and are called Mahomedans; with what justice it is difficult to say. Lin marched against this people; who, according to his confession, had been excited to insurrection by rapacious functionaries. His whole course from first to last was marked by bloodthirsty treachery: he inveigled the people into his power by false promises, and then butchered them, or burnt them alive.

Thus he expected to quell the insurrection; but the aborigines fought with desperation, and he was obliged to return several times to finish the work of extermination. It was a costly war: the Chinese soldiers were cut off by hundreds; and the victory would have been

very doubtful, if the never-failing panacea, silver, had not been profusely applied.

The deeds done made even the hardened Chinese shudder: Lin was accused, and a commission appointed to investigate the affair. He managed, however, so adroitly, that instead of any blame being cast upon him, he was extolled, and received the peacock's feather as a reward for his great services.

He then remained in tranquillity for some time, and finally retired on account of sickness; when he was again called, in 1850, to suppress a rising in Kwangse. He proceeded thitherward, but died on his way; thus closing a most chequered career, in which statesmanlike conduct was blended with the most despicable and criminal actions, and magnanimous, patriotic enterprizes were followed by treachery and ruffian-like deeds. Yet he was the idol of the people: the man who alone could strike terror into barbarians; and on that account much revered. The Emperor assigned him a station in Hades, under the title of the Faithful Duke.

One of the greatest calamities of recent occurrence, was the destruction of the crops

in Honan, by inundation. This misfortune was very extensive: millions were deprived of their subsistence, and terror and misery spread throughout the whole land. Many of the sufferers were relieved by death from their privations; others dragged out a miserable existence: everywhere there was wretchedness, disease, and death; notwithstanding the great and constant efforts made to relieve the sufferers.

A famine in China, amongst teeming multitudes, is much more fearful than a visitation of the same kind in countries less densely populated, where the people do not, in ordinary times, live up to their means of subsistence. After months of intense suffering, there came a fruitful harvest, and the people were at length rescued from utter destruction. This was not, however, the last time that the country was thus laid waste; for the following year similar inundations in Keangsoo, Houpe, and elsewhere, occasioned like destruction and starvation, as the rice, just in the ear, was swept away from the fields. The consequences were most fearful, and those districts still suffer from them.

If a Chinese emperor, according to the theory so frequently put forward in the public proclamations, does sympathize with all the misfortunes of his children, he certainly can scarcely have a moment of joy; for some untoward event or other will always occur to harrow his feelings. A deficiency of the circulating medium, the precious metal, was felt most severely, and occasioned great embarrassment to government. Taou-kwang saw the thirty million ounces silver, that were always kept as a reserve fund in the national treasury, dwindle down to eight millions; the second deposit, also, at Moukden, which is kept there to serve in time of need, was nearly reduced to half its amount, and yet the functionaries were not paid their regular salaries.

All schemes for remedying the evil failed: the general account given by order of the government stated that there were forty million ounces of arrears. It was, therefore, resolved that the military only should receive pay, and the civilians wait until the finances should be in a more flourishing condition.

Taou-kwang now felt the necessity of substituting some other taxes for the exist-

ing system of deriving the revenue solely from the necessaries of life; but he had not the courage to act up to his views, and overthrow a system that had become venerable through the usage of ages.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Emperor's distaste for public affairs.—Confidence placed by Taou-kwang in Keying.—Opposition of the people to the opening of the gates of Canton.—Taou-kwang sides with the people, and their triumph.—Accusations against Keying.—Hwang dismissed from power.—Retrograde movement.—Taou-kwang's faculties become weakened.—His religious habits increase.—His alternate disgust and reverence for idolatry.—He becomes reserved.—His anticipations of a long life.—Grave character of the court.—Dangers of interfering with the exchequer.—The suggestion of improvements considered heresy.—Taou-kwang's endeavours to conceal his increasing infirmities.—His pilgrimage to the ancestral tombs.—He dispels the rumours of his approaching death.—His criticisms on the army and navy.—He proposes plans for the improvement of military discipline.—Their inefficiency.—Unsuccessful attempts to exchange the musket for the bow.—Slow progress of improvement in the navy.—Increasing power of pirates.—Interference of the British.—Piratical ravages on the coast of Kwang-tung under Sapongtsae.—His fleet destroyed by the British men-of-war.—His escape and rise to rank.—Partial cessation of piracy.—Attempt at reform by a Portuguese governor.—His murder.—Peace-offering to his countrymen.—Risings in 1849.—Geographical know-

ledge desirable for an Emperor of China. — Taou-kwang encourages the publication of geographical works. —Influence of Protestant missionaries.

THE Emperor's life became, with his advanced age, more retired: he felt a disinclination to interfere in the government, and left most of his affairs to his ministers. Keying especially was honoured with the most distinguished marks of favour: he was constantly about his master's person, was entrusted with the management of the most important affairs, stood at the head of various institutions and establishments, and was established as the great favourite, who sat frequently at the council table, and directed the course of policy.

The year 1849 now approached, when, according to treaty, the city gates of Canton were to be thrown open to foreigners. Keying himself had pledged his word that this should take place, and, in a council held on the subject, he declared that the fulfilment of this engagement was not to be avoided. The Canton populace, under the guidance of Seu, the governor-general, thought otherwise; and through their protector they addressed a petition of rights to Taou-kwang, insisting strenu-

ously upon the privilege of deciding this matter themselves, and adopting measures of self-defence to repel the barbarians. The Emperor was weak enough to grant this, and wrote back that the will of the people was the will of Heaven.

From that moment the populace considered themselves supreme; they paraded the streets armed, and committed outrages, to shew that they were a sovereign people.

Keying was in the mean while accused of having sold the country, and laid the foundation of all the subsequent financial difficulties, by paying over so much money to the English. Taou-kwang could not disguise his fears that, on account of this breach of the treaty, Chusan might again be occupied; and Keying was sent to the adjacent coast, to negotiate in case such an event should occur; but he proceeded thither ostensibly to investigate the pecuniary state of the Chekeang province, and to hold a review of the troops.

Keying was much annoyed by being constantly taunted with having yielded in a cowardly manner to the barbarians, instead of boldly resisting them, like Seu. His

enemies had undermined his authority at the capital, and he returned from his mission sick at heart. Taou-kwang sent him some ginseng to restore him, as a last token of favour; yet, notwithstanding all his endeavours, he could not regain his former power.

His trusty coadjutor, Hwang, had fallen long before. The Emperor had praised him, in his circular, as the most effective and wisest of his officers; but shortly afterwards he was accused of having transgressed the law, by recommending an officer of sixty-one years of age for a command: sixty years being the utmost limit of age during which promotion can take place. On this absurd pretence he was dismissed from his office and left at Canton, to serve there for a time in an inferior capacity; nor did he again appear on the theatre of political action.

Several other mandarins, the declared friends of foreigners, gradually lost their offices, and others of the most opposite sentiments took their place. This was a retrograde movement, much to the injury of the best interests of the Empire in its foreign relations; but it was applauded by the Canton people, being

flattering to their national vanity, though in reality destructive to their wealth and prospects.

Taou-kwang was not without misgivings that the course pursued might lead to a fearful collision, and require new sacrifices from the already exhausted treasury. But day after day wore on; no remonstrance, no demonstration ensued; and seeing that no notice was taken of the matter, he listened to the voice of the stronger party clamorous for war, and followed their suggestions: or rather, gave an assent to what they dictated.

He had reached a premature old age: his faculties were weakened, his body decayed, and frequent monitors appeared, in the shape of temporary indispositions, to remind him that he was not long for this world. His religious habits increased in the same degree: he frequently hastened to the temples to pour out libations, he also fasted, and submitted to other exercises enjoined by the Lama priests. Yet there were times when idolatry appeared to him as an abomination, and he abstained from its rites with disgust; but then, again, the worship of the black dragon attracted

his attention, and it was all at once heard that he had entered the temple of that god, and prostrated himself before the altar, whilst burning incense to the idol.

It is very difficult to divine the workings of the imperial mind; but he seems to have had an idea, that the emblem of the Chinese dragon was the patron to whom prayers ought to be addressed; and the worship of the serpent, the old dragon, engaged his attention for a considerable time.

In his manners, Taou-kwang grew more and more quiet and reserved: he spoke little, and that very indistinctly; performed the customary ceremonies at court without taking much interest in them; and held intercourse with very few friends. Some of the men to whom he had been most attached were removed by death; others had been separated from him by political intrigue; and he did not wish to form new connections in the evening of his life.

Any one who had seen the haggard old man, might have believed that his existence could not be prolonged more than a few days; but Taou-kwang had an idea that he was to

live as long as his grandsires, and therefore clung to life with uncommon tenacity.

Whatever may be the doctrines of paganism, they give no cheering view of eternity; they do not lessen the agonies of death, or administer consolation in the hour of need. This alone can be effected by the blessed gospel, that promises eternal life to all believers. All other trust falls to the ground.

The court partook much of the habits of the Emperor: only old people had any authority, the young ones being placed in the background; and a grave routine of business prevailed, unrelieved by any change, or any exhilarating recreation. Unless inundations, deficits in the treasury, or a casual rising of the people, occasionally roused the ministers from their torpor, little was done or said; and the most trivial things were submitted for consideration to fill up the time. Keying was for a long time the only active member of the cabinet, and he was ill rewarded for his pains: if any one asked for money, he was sure to be most severely reprimanded, if he did not lose his place altogether.

It was permitted to all officers, and to the people, to suggest any plan they pleased for filling the exchequer; but woe betide the man, who forced himself upon the attention of the revenue department as an adviser: whatever might be his merits, he was sure to be punished in some way or other.

The march of intellect, that which seemed in theory an alloy to "Reason's Glory" (Taou-kwang—the name of the Emperor's reign), was looked upon as a monster, however attractive the shape under which it appeared: even in the form of certain improvement, it was hooted and denounced. What ten years before had been acceptable advice, was now rank heresy; the promoters of the advancement of the nation were looked upon as dangerous innovators, if not as traitors.

We have now to relate the events of the two last years of the Emperor's life. There were many who speculated upon his death; and it was, therefore, Taou-kwang's determination always to appear, in the presence of strangers, hale, strong, and active, in order to give the lie to such expectations. It was for this reason that he set out in the spring for the

eastern tombs. Everybody anticipated that this pilgrimage would be made by proxy; when suddenly an order appeared directing the astronomical board to ascertain the propitious moment when the Emperor might set out on his journey.

After a great deal of deliberation, and consulting the stars, it was finally settled; a host of officers were ordered to form the *cortège;* the government at home was arranged; and the cavalcade set forth with great pomp. Several officers presented fruits, others ingots of silver, others silk dresses; and all were most graciously received by the Emperor. Those who thought that he would be unable to bear the fatigues of the journey, were greatly disappointed; for the whole journey was performed in a very short time by easy stages, and the Emperor's health seemed to be improved by the trip.

It is a crime for which capital punishment is awarded in China, even to allude to the probability of the Emperor's death; and many have suffered death on that account, or because they were accused of having used magical arts to ascertain the hour of his decease, or of

having made images resembling the monarch, and burned them. These and similar foolish practices, affording grounds for suspicion and cruelty, had prevailed, in all the preceding reigns; but Taou-kwang's reign was free from such absurdities.

Whenever the rumour gained ground, that he would very soon leave this world, the Emperor suddenly appeared in public, dressed in gorgeous style, and exerted himself to the utmost to shew that he still possessed great energy. Such was the case at a large party given on the second day of the year, when Taou-kwang had assembled a number of guests. All the highest grandees dined with him; and he was all cheerfulness and happiness, having cast off his lugubrious appearance: there was an extraordinary flow of conversation, and everybody congratulated the Emperor on his good looks. Yet, notwithstanding this flattery, his days were numbered. He also reviewed the body-guard, was present at the examination of archery, and, with his own hands, bestowed the rewards. The ridiculous custom of bringing damsels from all parts of the empire, for the Emperor to make choice

from amongst them, was still continued, and Taou-kwang pursued his ordinary course of life. A pilgrimage to some other spot was also projected, but not performed.

The discussions about the army and navy were manifold; and Taou-kwang, who thought himself thoroughly versed in military affairs, passed many strictures upon the existing state of affairs. He regretted that so many great defects should exist, and issued order after order, notifying all the errors committed by the framers of the system, and the upholders of military discipline. There were to be reviews; searching inquiries were to be made in every branch of administration; and the utmost vigilance, combined with requisite talent, was to be employed to render the army effective.

On reading such papers, and knowing that they were drawn up by a despot, one is apt to imagine that all these behests must have been enforced; yet, on beholding the condition of the troops, the conclusion is inevitable that the projected improvements ended in words: the army, indeed, was in a worse condition than before the war. Frequent attempts have

been made to exchange the musket for the bow; yet the ancient custom still prevails: it was with the aid of the bow that the Manchoos took the country, and this weapon is, therefore, considered very sacred. A number of the men, however, use the matchlock, whilst many of the self-constituted militia corps are furnished with fire-arms imported from Europe.

The state of the navy was much worse. Orders had been given to restore it to its pristine strength, and great efforts were made to carry them into effect. The progress, however, was very slow; and when, at length, a few vessels left the stocks, they kept in the harbours near the station, and very seldom went to sea.

The war having done great injury to the maritime trade, a host of idle, vicious sailors embarked in piracy, and began to oppose the mandarin junks, whose crews had acted in so cowardly a manner during the whole war. The evil rapidly increased; and the power of the pirates became so great, that no vessels, loaded with valuable articles, would venture to leave the port.

Taou-kwang, therefore, urged on the reluc-

tant naval officers to encounter these pirates in the open sea. To save their character and commissions, these officers were obliged to get up some sham fights, and report great victories. This only increased the evil; for the pirates, emboldened by success, sailed up the rivers even to cut out vessels, and carried destruction into the harbours.

Such was the state of affairs when the British men-of-war on the coast of China were finally obliged to interfere; there being no longer security for any trade. They commenced in the north, on the coast of Fŏkeen, where they did terrible execution; but the greatest destruction of the outlaws took place on the west coast of Kwangtung, near Tunkin, and some distance eastward of Hong Kong. In a very short time, a ruffian, formerly resident upon the latter island, had collected several fleets of junks, well armed and properly manned, with which he laid the whole coast under contribution. The outrages and cruelties committed by these pirates would appear incredible, if truly described; they were the terror and scourge of the people, on shore, and of every sea-going junk.

The pirates had long acted with impunity, and the Chinese Government, in its customary way of putting down commotions, had offered to appoint Sapongtsae, the leader, to be a naval officer in the imperial service, if he would surrender his fleet. To this he assented, and was upon the point of coming to an agreement, when the British men-of-war carried utter destruction amongst the whole fleet. Sapongtsae, however, escaped to shore, was well received by the governor-general, raised to high rank, and employed in an insurrection that had broken out on the peninsula of Leenchoo. There was now a temporary cessation of piracy on a large scale, whilst petty attacks at sea were as common as heretofore.

The Portuguese, after the treaty of Nanking, had concluded an agreement with the Chinese government, by which many privileges were secured to them. A liberal governor, who perceived the galling vassalage in which his countrymen were held, attempted several considerable changes, and greatly irritated the Chinese authorities. He was, therefore, proscribed; and sundry placards, ostensibly issued by the people, but in reality at the

instigation of satellites of government, incited the populace against him. He, however, paid no heed to these denunciations; but one day, when riding out accompanied by his aide-de-camp, he was attacked unawares near the barrier, dragged down from his horse, and assassinated; his head and one hand (the other having been lost in some engagement) being cut off, to be taken as trophies to Canton. The murderers acted most deliberately; and afterwards rendered thanks to their idols, for the success of the horrible plot. Seu, the governor-general, wrote word to the Emperor, that any punishment, however fearful, would be too slight for the crimes of the murdered man; but that Providence had interfered and made an example of him, by allowing him to suffer sudden death at the hands of some men who had to avenge their own injuries.

To satisfy the Portuguese government, Seu took a criminal out of prison, cut off his head, and sent it, with that of the late governor, as a peace-offering. There could be no doubt, that the Chinese functionaries had had a hand in these proceedings; but it was impossible to bring it home to them by direct proofs. Some ruffians

who had murdered two British officers, received the rank of mandarins, and were employed in quelling an insurrection. It would almost appear incredible that the Chinese government could descend so low: but it is an administration of expedients, and no means, however infamous, are rejected, if they accomplish the end.

In the representations made to Taou-kwang of all these proceedings, the odious part of the affair was always left out; the emperor cannot, therefore, be said to have given his approbation to such infamous measures, but merely to have acceded to what was reported to him. He acted up to the advice of Governor-general Seu, who was greatly esteemed by him; and by whose patriotic exertions, falsely so called, affairs in Kwang-tung were kept in proper order.

Whatever might be the professions of this grandee of carrying on an effective government, he could not prevent the coming forward, in 1849, of a mere adventurer, who was proclaimed king. This pretender promised exemption from taxes, and an entire freedom from all restraints; and great numbers of idle

fellows joined his standard; but he had reckoned upon the support of foreigners, and as he did not find it, he was obliged to fly for his life. Several hundreds of his adherents were killed on the spot, and the whole band dispersed. Similar risings took place in Shantung: a province remarkable for the stubbornness of the people; though it gave birth to Kung-foo-tze, the great legislator for obedience and entire submission. These were, however, suppressed, after repeated and lengthened expeditions, by dint of persuasions and threats.

We find several indications of Taou-kwang having, in the latter years of his life, paid much attention to statistics. It requires a zest for geographical science, to study all parts of the Chinese empire with accuracy; and there have been few emperors who have had a distinct idea of all their vast dominions. Taou-kwang, no doubt, formed an exception; and he even encouraged the publication of geographical works respecting other countries: formerly thought a subject too trivial to be considered worthy of notice. Two foreigners compiled works of this description at the

express desire of the Emperor; and some Chinese officers of high rank made similar attempts. These books were sent to the high authorities in the various provinces, that they might acquire some knowledge of other lands.

The number of Protestant missionaries who had gradually established themselves in the emporiums of the empire open to foreign trade, contributed, likewise, to promote a better and more accurate knowledge of the character of foreigners, and gave rise to the hope that they would materially influence the minds of the Chinese nation, by inculcating the only principles given to man which convey the knowledge of salvation. The pure gospel had been embraced by a number of distinguished natives, who themselves promulgated it by word of mouth, and by their writings. Though a mere drop of truth in the ocean of error, yet, under the guidance of an Almighty Saviour, who has all power in heaven and in earth, great results may be expected: without that aid, how powerless are all human endeavours!

CHAPTER XVII.

Taou-kwang's approaching end.—Intrigues at Court.—Death of the Empress-dowager. — The Emperor's account of it. — Honours paid to her memory.—Her character.—Taou-kwang's grief and mourning.—His last edict.—He appoints Yih-choo his successor.—Rumour of Hwuy-wang's plot against the prince. — Death of Taou-kwang. — Proclamation of Hienfung. — He sums up his father's character. — Last request of Taou-kwang.—Title under which he is worshipped. —Hienfung's change of character.—His superstition. — Muchangah and Keying discarded.—Companions of the Emperor.—Anticipated effect of steam navigation on China.—Conclusion.

TAOU-KWANG seems to have had some forebodings of his approaching end; he accordingly regulated all the affairs of his house, and removed some of the princes from the court, under various pretexts; but in reality because they had given great umbrage by their violent conduct. He drew his friends nearer

and nearer round him, and endeavoured to strengthen the ties of their attachment by insinuating manners, and by presents, of little value in themselves, but very precious as marks of the donor's favour.

He was particularly fond of sending presents of ginseng to invalids, or very old servants; and he would sometimes inscribe with his own hand, on a large piece of paper, the character for happiness and longevity. These were hung up in the hall of state, and preserved as the most precious relics.

Intrigue was, however, still at work, to deprive the Manchoo and Chinese titular princes of their station. It was a frivolous charge brought against them, to effect their downfall; but it required a very tedious investigation, and finally led to their being put down some steps in rank. Taou-kwang, however, was soon reconciled to his ancient faithful servants: all the reminiscences of their past services returned, and they remained in authority. This was quite contrary to the expectations of some sycophants, who had purposely laid a trap to inveigle the grandees into committing a fault.

Matters proceeded in their ordinary course during the last months of Taou-kwang's reign, until a sad event happened, which grieved the Emperor to the very heart's core. This was the death of his adopted and idolized mother, to whom he had given his whole confidence, and shewed the most devoted veneration, whom he visited regularly, who was to him everything, and whose loss was a blow from which his shattered constitution could never recover.

The official account given by the Emperor himself, respecting the decease of his adopted parent, is as follows:—"We have attended her Majesty since we ascended the throne, and have nurtured her twenty-nine years. We have seen that in her declining days she had every comfort, and that she had passed the age of eighty; and we encouraged ourselves that she would happily add one year to another, until she enjoyed the felicity of seeing a century. Lately, on the 19th January (1850), she took an airing in the garden, and returned to her palace; we daily went to inquire about her health; and then unexpectedly became aware that our beloved relative was not in

usual vigour. We thought that if she was nursed a few days with care, she would then recover her health; but, contrary to all anticipation, her ailments daily increased in violence, and on the 24th, at half-past three o'clock P.M., she drove the fairy chariot, and went the long journey. Our grief broke out in loud lamentations, for we were greatly afflicted. We have been happy in attending to her behests, as men are rejoiced by the sun which prolongs their lives; but we can never now again look upon her affectionate countenance, and we are inconsolable. We received her last orders, that mourning should be worn only twenty-seven days; but we cannot be satisfied with this, and therefore, as it is right, we ourselves shall put on the filial garb for a hundred days, twenty-seven of which we shall pass in deep mourning. As to her requisition, that since we are nearly seventy years old we ought not to give way to deep grief, for the cares of government are heavy, we cannot presume to disobey it, and must constrain ourselves to repress these feelings. Let daily libations be poured out before her in the palace of Contentment. We shall ourselves

remain at the palace where her bier is placed, to sacrifice to her manes," &c.

Divine honours were rendered to her shade throughout the whole Empire; and in every city tablets were erected to commemorate her virtues, and to honour her in her death. Such is the idol worship of the Chinese: one generation deifies the other. The Empress was formally canonized; and her title—that of filial, harmonious, reverend, affectionate, healthy, cheerful, placid, accomplished, heavenly-conformed, prosperous, holy Empress of Keaking—placed amongst the long series of tablets in the imperial ancestral temples, to be frequently worshipped by the monarch and the whole imperial clan.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the Empress had any influence upon government affairs. Nothing is known of it, and we are therefore inclined to believe that she was satisfied with now and then dropping an exhortation, when her son humbly appeared below her window. Only once she interposed, and then it was to excite him to [illegible] exterminating war against [illegible] was, perhaps, the Manchoo pride which [illegible] to call

forth all the energy of the Emperor to maintain his sinking cause. She was otherwise very placid; not easily aroused to anger, and free from that low intrigue which is the disgrace of most oriental courts. To move in a certain routine, and above all to avoid collisions with parties that were foreign to her range of ideas, was her first wish. When high officials endeavoured to make use of her to obtain their ends, she very adroitly withdrew, and disappeared in the recesses of the harem.

Taou-kwang's grief was sincere; it preyed daily upon his mind, and he appears never again to have been himself. When a contracted mind concentrates all its strength upon one object, and no other thoughts or ideas occupy it, the consequences are often fatal: the individual is either reduced to a state of monomania, or the bodily frame sinks under the pressure. The latter was the case with Taou-kwang. There remained few attractions for him in life; he had tasted all the joys which fall to the share of a mortal, and his shattered frame could not well endure mental agony. His daily food was limited, according to Chinese custom, to rice and water; he passed

his time, with dishevelled hair and dressed in sackcloth, near the coffin, sleeping upon a very hard couch.

The last edict he issued was to the effect that the new year's day should be changed, on account of an eclipse that was then to take place; it being a very unfortunate omen to commence another year with such an event: this was on the 11th February 1850. Nothing more was heard of Taou-kwang for several days, although various reports, one as improbable as the other, were current. On the 25th February, however, there appeared an edict in the vermilion pencil:—"Let Yih-choo, the imperial fourth son, be set forth as heir-apparent. You princes and officers, why wait for our words? Assist and support him with united hearts. And do you all regard whatever pertains to the concerns of the country as of high importance, without caring for anything else."

These were ostensibly the Emperor's last words: what actually happened in the palace is not accurately known. It is said that Hwuy-wang did his utmost to be appointed successor, and that he was supported by a

strong party. A fire—whether accidentally breaking out, or intentionally kindled to create disturbance, is not known—hastened the death of Taou-kwang. His wishes no doubt were, that Yih-choo, his son, whom he tenderly loved, should be Emperor after him; and these prevailed against a powerful faction.

The prime minister, Muchangah, seems to have been undecided; and Keying was inactive for some time; but a number of powerful nobles, with Laishangah, the president of the Colonial Board, at their head, were very anxious to raise Yih-choo to the throne. Rumour says, that Hwuy-wang went so far as to arrange a plot for the destruction of the prince; and that his younger brother, the adopted heir of his uncle, joined in the attempt. If this were actually the case, the new Emperor readily forgave its author; for from the moment he attained to power he honoured Hwuy-wang above all courtiers, and had him frequently at his side; dispensing, at the same time, with the prostrations, and other degrading ceremonies. Thus died Taou-kwang, aged sixty-nine years and seven months, having been born 12th September 1781.

His son Yih-choo, who subsequently, under the name of Hien-fung (general plenty), ascended the throne, said in his proclamation :— "We have received from our late imperial father, his Majesty, who has just gone on his journey, our being and support; enjoying a great nourishing, anxious care, as high and boundless as Heaven. Last year, after the summer had commenced, he suddenly felt himself indisposed; his bodily strength had been somewhat impaired, and the important duties connected with the demise of the Empress-dowager, and his grief and anxiety, aggravated his weakness and disease, so that his strength and constitution were greatly enfeebled. He called to-day the council, and ordained that we should be regarded as the heir-apparent. We received this decree in anguish and tears; for we still hoped that, by the utmost and constant care of his person, and a temporary cessation of [illegible] care, his vigour and health might be preserved. We had barely received his last commands and regards, when his malady increased in force and violence to the utmost, and he mounted the dragon, and became a guest on high.

Beating the ground and invoking Heaven, I vainly essayed to reach and recall him."

The son, summing up the character of his father, says of him:—"He ruled the world for thirty years; day and night he attended with great diligence to his duties, not allowing himself the least rest. In all things he reverenced Heaven, and imitated his predecessors; and his sedulous attention to the affairs of government, his love for his people, his literary attainments, and his military prowess, are not easily described. And in respect to his diffusing happiness, and his anxious care lest there should be pestilence, or other distress, no sooner had any province met with a slight calamity than he disbursed his treasures and remitted the taxes; his gracious benevolence being instantly shewn. So, too, he was constantly laying up the revenue in store for use, and devising means to prevent damage from the (yellow) river, and planning so that no living thing should lack protection. His boundless humanity drew all within its influence, so that everything that hath breath laments his departure. Whilst weeping tears of blood and beating

our breast, how can we yet refrain our words? Considering the duties imposed upon our own unworthy self, we are troubled with painful apprehensions; yet we rely upon the constant loyalty of our civil and military officers to assist us to rule with glory."

The last requests of Taou-kwang rather shewed him a humble man. He did not wish that long mourning should be ordered for him, and desired that no stone tablet should be erected to record his merits; that no sacrifices, conjointly with heaven and earth, should be offered up to him; and that his ancestorial tablet of wood should not be placed in the state temple of his predecessors. In the testament, Taou-kwang speaks with similar modesty of himself and his government; hoping the best, and alluding but slightly to the war with the English, and other disagreeable matters. We quote some passages.

"From the comm[illegible]nt [illegible]ur reign, we have sent out orders, writ[illegible]urself, warning above all things again[illegible]y, licentiousness, covetousness, and [illegible]ire of gain; statesmen and people t[illegible]ughout the realm, have been alike cognizant of this. So little

fools beyond the western ocean were chastised and quelled by our troops, and peace was soon made; but we presumed not to vaunt our martial powers.

"A trifling dispute subsequently arose on the maritime frontiers, in the south-east; but, like the good men of ancient times, who regarded love to men as a prime virtue, how could we bear that our innocent babes should be exposed to the horrors of war? We therefore waived our trifling dissatisfaction, and entered upon a compact, whereby we both tranquillized our own borders, and compassionated those from afar, as has been now the case for ten years; instantly causing the hurtful flames of war to die of themselves, and new people and foreigners to trade with each other in harmony. In this respect, we certainly exhibited the inexpressible affection we have for our beloved people, and to this day the world has worthily ju[illegible] intentions.

"When ove[illegible]ng calamities by flood or drought came, [illegible]shed for ourself, that we had involved [illegible]e in constant misery and toil; whe[illegible] ou[illegible]ficers have requested us to re[illegible] arrears, or grant aid, there has

been no case in which we have not copiously bestowed our largesses.

"Our own personal health has usually been vigorous; but about the spring and summer of last year, we felt suddenly indisposed. Lately our breathing has been more difficult, and our disease daily increases. Whereas Heaven created this people, and has set over them a shepherd, let him incessantly shew his carefulness, diligence, solicitude; thereby he will learn the tempers of men, comfort his people, and perpetuate our mighty dynasty." Of his son and successor, he remarks: "the heir-apparent has exhibited a humane and filial disposition, and he is well established in virtue, rectitude, and generous feeling; so that he will be adequate to receiving the charge entrusted to him."

The ancestral title, received in the hall of the ancestors, was Leuen-tsung-ching-kwang-te (wise ancestor and perfect Emperor), which will be the name under which Taou-kwang is to be worshipped.

The successor, Hien-fung, on his accession greatly disappointed many of his partizans. Scarcely amenable to control when yet Prince Yih-choo,

he has since become sedate and pensive, fond of pageantry and pomp, and exceedingly superstitious. He constantly repairs to the temples, consults the idols, sacrifices in person, and never undertakes a single important act without obtaining encouragement from some image or other.

He does not intend to tread in the steps of his father, and has discarded Muchangah, the premier, as well as Keying; partly because they were favourable to foreigners. The great man at court, amongst others, is Saeshangah. Hien-fung's character is, however, not yet sufficiently developed to speak with certainty about his future proceedings; nor has he been sufficiently tried to shew the real stuff of which he is composed. Most of his companions are Manchoos; men well known for their obstinate disposition and violent passions. Still, his government is not yet formed, and it would be proper to wait the further development. All parties are agreed that he possesses little understanding, and that he is rather a child of circumstances than of forethought.

If we consider the thirty years of Taou-

kwang's reign as the most important period of Chinese history, it is from a feeling of the immense results which the partial opening of the country must finally have upon the whole nation. Steam navigation has brought China thousands of miles nearer Europe, and increased tenfold the influence of European ideas: it is impossible to prevent their approach, and the inevitable consequences which soon will shew themselves. The time for an imperceptible progress of the human race is past; greater events, rapid advances, and extraordinary strides may now be expected, even in the most sluggish of all races—the Chinese.

The Creator did not call into being these myriads merely to go through a material existence; dishonouring the only true God by idolatry and superstition, and then sinking into the grave to meet the Judge of the living and dead. Far higher is the destiny of this very intelligent race; and China may yet exhibit a display of divine power and wisdom such as the world has never witnessed. The whole human race must ultimately be subjected to the reign of the Son of God, for

He must rule until His foes are made His footstool. China, with all the adjacent countries, is comprised in this general conquest: not by the arms of men, but by the powerful conviction of the Spirit of God; who will glorify Christ, and subject to Him all hearts.

THE END.

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